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**SENSE PERCEPTION AND TESTIMONY IN THE
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN**

BY

SUNNY, KUAN-HUI WANG

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Sense Perception and Testimony in the Gospel According to John

Sunny, Kuan-Hui Wang

Abstract

This thesis aims to contribute to Johannine scholarship on sense perception and testimony. While the focus has tended to be on one or the other, this thesis shows that sense perception and testimony are used together in John with the intention of drawing the readers into the narrative so that they become witnesses in an emotionally engaged way.

The first chapter outlines the focus of the thesis and presents the history of scholarship on sense perception and testimony. In Chapter 2, we survey the Johannine use of sense perception and testimony to show that there is a *prima facie* case for regarding sense perception as important in giving testimony about God. In Chapter 3, we argue that John is writing to believers to strengthen their faith. The next two chapters survey possible influence on the Johannine use of sense perception in relation to testimony within the Jewish Scripture and the rhetorical dimension of Hellenistic culture.

The sixth to eighth chapters examine the Gospel itself. In Chapter 6, we discuss how, for John, sense perception is theologically important in coming to a knowledge of God. In Chapter 7, we look at testimony during Jesus' public ministry to see how John emphasises physical sense perception through signs and other types of testimony, such as the incidents involving the Samaritan woman and the anointing at Bethany. In Chapter 8, we argue that sense perception and testimony continue to work together within the community after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Our investigation shows that John's use of sense perception together with testimony is rooted in Jewish literature. John also employs a rhetorical technique which appeals to the persuasive power of sense perception to make his narrative vivid. John

does not downplay sense perception. Rather, he uses it in the context of testimony as a means of persuasion to draw the readers, in their imagination, into the experience of the first disciples and thus deeper into faith and witness.

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals and monograph series follow the forms indicated in the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christians Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999).

Declaration

This work has been submitted to the University of Durham in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and none of it has been previously submitted to the University of Durham or in any other university for a degree.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published in any format, including electronic, without the author's prior written consent. All information derived from this thesis should be acknowledged appropriately.

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Chapter 1: The Focus of the Thesis

1. Introduction

‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth’ (John 1:14). Thus John’s Gospel expresses the reality of Jesus’ physical presence, a fleshly presence which is sense-perceptible and a glory which is in some sense accessible to ‘sight.’ Much scholarship has been devoted to the analysis of sight and faith in John, with a marked tendency to emphasise the ‘spiritual’ and symbolic meaning of sight and to marginalise or downplay the significance of the literal senses. Rather less attention has been paid, until recently, to the senses other than sight (and hearing). In this thesis, we are acutely conscious of the complexity and ambiguity of Johannine language,¹ and the heavy use of imagery and symbolism,² but our aim is to put emphasis again on the significance of the senses as literal and physical phenomena, and to conjoin in new ways the twin themes of sense perception and testimony. In particular, our goal is to:

- a) show the interconnection between sense perception and testimony, not as a means of supporting the historicity of the text through the authority of eyewitness testimony, but to call attention to a theological conjunction of motifs that relates the revelation of God to the realities of embodied sense perception;
- b) show that the senses are theologically relevant to John’s conception of knowledge of God and of Jesus, drawing on Scriptural themes which function as significant influences on his theology;

¹ For a history of scholarship on John’s use of language, see S. Hamid-Khani, *Revelation and Concealment of Christ: A Theological Inquiry into the Elusive Language of the Fourth Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

² For a history of scholarship on John’s use of symbolism and imagery, see R. Zimmermann, *Christologie der Bilder im Johannesevangelium: die Christopoetik des Vierten Evangeliums unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Joh 10* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 77–87.

- c) indicate the rhetorical effectiveness of John's appeal to the senses, which serves to enhance the vividness of the narrative and to draw the readers in faith into the experience of the disciples, just as ἐνάργεια is used in Greek and Roman rhetoric to draw readers/hearers into a narrative.

In this introductory chapter, we chart some of the main trends in scholarship on John in relation to sense perception (2.1) and testimony (2.2), and note both strengths which may be developed and gaps or weakness which require closer attention. At the end (3) we spell out in fuller terms the aims of this thesis and explain its structure and flow.

2. History of Scholarship

2.1. Sense Perception

Sense perception has drawn Johannine scholars' attention for three main reasons. Firstly, it is associated with another significant theme in the Gospel: faith. The association of sense perception and faith raises scholarly debate as to whether sense perception is presented as a valid means to faith. On the subject of faith, one cannot neglect the relationship between signs and faith, where sense perception also plays a significant role. This then raises the related question of whether faith can be achieved by signs. Secondly, it is associated with Johannine Christology. The Gospel of John is the only Gospel that emphasises the incarnation of the Word. Not only that, John emphasises that the Johannine community has seen the glory of the Word. Jesus' relationship with the Father is also expressed in the language of sense perception. The Johannine Jesus often talks about his vision of God and that he hears from God. Thus sense perception is important in discussing Johannine Christology, yet how to understand John's use of sense perception in this context is another debated issue. Most scholars look for a symbolic meaning of sense perception; others see significance in the physical dimension of sense perception. Lastly, John makes reference to all five senses, yet most scholars focus only on sight and hearing. Some scholars have tried to fill the gap and have drawn our attention to John's use of the five senses. We here outline these interrelated elements of the scholarly discussion of sense perception in John.

2.1.1. Sense Perception and Faith

The relationship between the senses and faith has been a critical issue in Johannine scholarship at least since the Reformation. The placing of ‘the word of God’ at the centre of Christianity in reformed theology led to the prioritisation of hearing over seeing.³ This teaching can be found consistently throughout Calvin’s commentary on John. With reference to John 20:29, he says, ‘Here Christ commends faith on the grounds that it acquiesces in the simple Word and does not depend at all on the sense and reason of the flesh.’⁴ When he discusses passages such as John 2:11; 2:23; 4:53; 7:31 and 11:45, where people believed when they saw, he stresses that this kind of faith is imprecise because they ‘depended more on miracles than on teaching.’⁵ He emphasises that faith does not rely on carnal sense perception; rather, it is from hearing the Word and the inner illumination and sealing of the Spirit. Calvin shows interest in the language of sense perception only when dealing with faith and he denies that a faith based on sight is faith, because faith comes through hearing.

R. Bultmann has been one of the most influential Johannine scholars of the twentieth century. His commentary on the Gospel of John and his *New Testament Theology* are important for Johannine scholarship because of his detailed exegetical and historical analysis. In his second volume of *New Testament Theology*, he expresses his view on signs and faith. He recognises that in John, ‘signs’ reveal Jesus’ glory, and that John reproves those who refuse to be convinced by many miracles (John 12:37).⁶ But referring to John 4:48 and John 20:29, he argues that ‘the meaning of the sign does not lie in the miraculous occurrence.’ Thus Bultmann regards signs as ‘pictures, symbols.’⁷ They all have specific symbolic meaning. Since resurrection is considered as one of the signs, it does not have any special significance.⁸ Jesus’ words to Thomas are seen by Bultmann as ‘a criticism of the small faith which asks for

³ This is partly due to the influence of Paul (Rom 10:17). Cf. B. Pitkin, *What Pure Eyes Could See: Calvin’s Doctrine of Faith in Its Exegetical Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 92.

⁴ J. Calvin, *The Gospel According to St John 11–21 and the First Epistle of John* (trans. T. H. L. Parker; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1961), 2:211.

⁵ J. Calvin, *The Gospel According to St John 1–10* (trans. T. H. L. Parker; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1959), 1:193.

⁶ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. K. Grobel; 2 vols.; London: SCM, 1952), 2:44.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 2:56.

tangible demonstrations of the Revealer' and also 'contains a warning against taking the Easter-stories for more than they are able to be: signs and pictures of the Easter faith.'⁹ This strong Lutheran downplaying of the physical senses as a means of historical 'proof' opens an important issue for debate. We will have to consider whether Bultmann's view on signs and faith is sustainable and whether Jesus' words to Thomas are indeed a criticism.

How faith is achieved is an important topic in Bultmann's theological interpretation of John. His preference for hearing over seeing in relation to faith is made clear by his subtitle, 'Faith as the Hearing of the Word.'¹⁰ He differentiates two kinds of hearing, 'genuine hearing,' and 'mere perception.' He argues that only 'a hearkening-and-learning' (John 6:45) or 'a hearing-and-keeping' (John 12:47) can evoke faith.¹¹ Thus the Jews' failure to 'hear' Jesus' words is the same as saying they fail to believe him. He treats not only 'hearing' and 'believing' but also 'seeing' and 'believing' as synonyms. He refers to John 6:40 and 12:45 to support his idea that these two verbs are parallel to each other.¹² Because of Bultmann's emphasis on the importance of faith in John, he identifies Jesus' person with Jesus' word and Jesus' work with his word. Thus seeing and hearing are united in John 5:37 and 8:38.¹³ We can see that, in Bultmann's interpretation, seeing, hearing and believing are not distinguished in effect. Even though John does use various words for believing, and though 'seeing' is often used together with 'believing,' that does not mean that John uses those two verbs as synonyms.¹⁴ Bultmann's symbolic interpretation of signs and sense perception leads to the view that the faith based on seeing signs or hearing Jesus' discourse is only a 'seeming' but not a 'genuine' faith.¹⁵ His argument is based on his interpretation of John 2:23, 4:48 and 20:29. He does not, however, examine those verses in detail. We shall have to examine whether these verses really denigrate sense perception or suggest that faith based on sight is inferior.

⁹ Ibid., 2:57.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2:70.

¹¹ Ibid., 2:70–74.

¹² Bultmann is not the only scholar who thinks this way. Some scholars also render the verb of sight in John 12:45 as 'believing.' G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 217. Cf. Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:70–74.

¹³ Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:72.

¹⁴ F. Mussner, *The Historical Jesus in the Gospel of St. John* (trans. W. J. O'Hara; London: Burns & Oates, 1967), 23.

¹⁵ Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:73.

The relationship between faith and vision has received attention in English, French¹⁶ and German scholarship.¹⁷ In contrast to Bultmann, G. L. Phillips (1957) in his article, 'Faith and Vision in the Fourth Gospel,' explores the relationship between faith and sight, and argues that faith and vision are not mutually exclusive.¹⁸ Although Phillips views the function of sight positively, his differentiation of levels of sight remains questionable.

Oscar Cullmann's work published in 1948, 'Εἶδεν Καὶ Ἐπίστευσεν. La Vie de Jésus, Object de la 'Vue' et de la 'Foi', d'après le Quatrième Évangile' deserves our attention because he explores not only different levels of sense perception but also the relationship of sense perception with faith and eyewitness testimony. This is an extended study based on his previous work on the ambiguity of John's language.¹⁹ He refers to several key events where physical sense perception is emphasised, such as the Lazarus story, the voice from heaven, the scene at the tomb, and the Thomas episode to show that 'it is important that the witnesses really see with their eyes, and that they hear with their ears.'²⁰ However, he also argues that sight is not sufficient for faith because many people saw the work of Jesus first hand and heard his words and yet did not come to faith.²¹ Therefore, he argues, faith based solely on sight is not truth faith. True faith is 'an act that takes place in the hearts of those who believe.'²² It is necessary for the first disciples to see and believe but 'the act of faith must be added to sight.'²³ Thus he argues that John's readers are in a privileged position because they have 'sight,' that is the 'written witness of the disciples' and 'inner sight,' that is inspired by the Holy Spirit.²⁴ Cullmann understands John's use of physical sense perception in the context of eyewitness testimony and, referring to

¹⁶ O. Cullmann, "Εἶδεν Καὶ Ἐπίστευσεν. La Vie de Jésus, Object de la 'Vue' et de la 'Foi', d'après le Quatrième Évangile," Pages 52–61 in *Aux Sources De La Tradition Chrétienne: Mélanges Offerts À M Maurice Goguel À L'occasion De Son Soixante-Dixième Anniversaire* (eds. O. Cullmann and P. Menoud; Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1950).

¹⁷ H. Wenz, "Sehen und Glauben bei Johannes," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 17 (1961): 17–25. Wenz focuses on the story of Thomas, in particular, John 20:29. His conclusion is that sight and faith are not radically opposite.

¹⁸ G. L. Phillips, "Faith and Vision in the Fourth Gospel," Pages 83–96 in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (ed. F. L. Cross; London: Mowbray, 1957), 83–96.

¹⁹ O. Cullmann, "Der johanneische Gebrauch doppeldeutiger Ausdrücke als Schlüssel zum Verständnis des Vierten Evangeliums," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 4 (1948): 360–372.

²⁰ Cullmann, "Εἶδεν," 56.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 56–57.

²² *Ibid.*, 57.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

John 9:39, he also recognises that John's sense perception operates on a spiritual level (*contemplation spirituelle*).²⁵ His study is significant for he points out that the simultaneity of 'seeing with the eyes (*voir avec les yeux*)' and 'contemplating by faith (*contempler par la foi*)' is one of the characteristics of John's Gospel.²⁶ This present thesis develops Cullmann's argument that physical sight and spiritual insight are both important in John but, rather than arguing for the historicity of events, it argues that the substance and form of what is written in John is designed to draw the readers in, so that they are able to perceive what the characters physically experienced - and more.

Johannine 'seeing' is studied thematically in Clemens Hergenröder's book (1996), *Wir schauten seine Herrlichkeit*. Because of the extensive occurrence of verbs of seeing, Hergenröder regards John as a 'Mann des Auges' (man of the eye) and 'der Zeuge der Offenbarung als Epiphanie' (the witness of revelation as epiphany).²⁷ He starts with a close examination of the different verbs of seeing used in John and concludes that they are not used simply as synonyms. Rather, each verb has a particular profile, although that does not exclude significant overlaps.²⁸ He argues for 'seeing as a way to faith,' and uses Thomas and the Easter event as examples. He emphasises that the Gospel of John should be read in the light of those disclosure events.²⁹

C. Koester (1989) in his article, 'Hearing, seeing, and believing in the Gospel of John,' centres his study on the senses of sight and hearing. His aim is not to discover the symbolic meaning behind sense perception, but to compare sight and hearing in relation to faith. He argues that true faith 'is engendered through, but never comes from seeing signs.' Seeing signs only confirms faith.³⁰ Koester, rightly we think, argues that the sense of hearing is significant in giving testimony to Jesus and that many in John believe through hearing. However, he fails to do justice to those

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ C. Hergenröder, *Wir Schauten seine Herrlichkeit: das Johanneische Sprechen vom Sehen im Horizont von Selbsterschliessung Jesu und Antwort des Menschen* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1996), 3.

²⁸ Ibid., 204.

²⁹ Ibid., 567.

³⁰ C. R. Koester, "Hearing, Seeing, and Believing in the Gospel of John," *Biblica* 70 (1989): 327–348.

statements that suggest that seeing signs should lead to faith (John 12:37–38 and 20:30–31).³¹ This dichotomy between hearing Jesus' words and seeing Jesus' signs does not fit the overall Johannine treatment of sense perception in relation to faith. Hearing Jesus' words and seeing Jesus' signs both lead to one of two responses: belief or rejection. John never suggests that, between hearing and seeing, one is more significant than the other.

Thus scholars' views are diverse regarding the means to faith. Calvin, Bultmann and Koester, though arguing from different perspectives, reach the same conclusion that faith is reached through hearing words not seeing signs. While they prefer hearing over sight in relation to faith, Philips, Hergenröder and Cullmann argue that sight is important to faith, although there are occasions when sight does not lead to faith. We argue that in John, faith can be the outcome of either hearing words or seeing signs. There is no need to prefer one over another. In most of the works of scholars mentioned above, John 2:23, 4:48 and 20:29 are all seen as evidence to support the case that John denigrates sense perception. We shall have to investigate whether this is indeed so, through a detailed and thorough exegesis of these verses.

2.1.2. Symbolic Interpretation of Sense Perception

Because of the rise of literary criticism, scholars are more interested in the final product of the Gospel and the investigation of its theology than meaning that would derive from a literary dissection of the Gospel.³² Culpepper (1983) was one of the first scholars who applied literary criticism to the Gospel of John. In his *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, he drew scholarly attention to the pictorial aspect of Johannine language.³³ Since then, the study of Johannine symbolism and imagery has flourished. Several Johannine scholars, such as Dorothy Lee (1994) and Craig Koester (1995), have shown interest in exploring this aspect of the Gospel.

³¹ Thompson makes a similar criticism. M. M. Thompson, "Signs and Faith in the Fourth Gospel," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 (1991): 89–108, at 99 n. 24.

³² G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1980).

³³ R. A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

Lee observes the complexity of John's use of sense perception at both symbolic and physical levels. She recognises that John's signs-narratives are 'symbolic narrative,' but points out, at the same time, the significance of physical sense perception in John. In her book, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel*, she identifies several symbolic narratives which are mostly narratives of signs. She excludes the wine miracle, the passion and resurrection narrative and the footwashing from her discussion because she thinks that either they do not have 'a symbolic focus' or they are not concerned with the development of the faith of the characters.³⁴ The exclusion of these passages is questionable, however, since the words πιστεύω and σημεῖον are used in John 2:11 and several times in John 18–21 (John 19:35; 20:8, 25, 29, 31). Lee recognises that Johannine signs operate on a material and physical level, but she argues that it is the 'symbolic function within the narrative which is the main point.'³⁵ This shows that she is more interested in discovering the symbolic meaning of sensual events, and this approach makes her pay scant attention to the literal meaning of the text.³⁶

A symbolic reading of John's sense perception is explored further in *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, where Koester examines the function of symbolism. According to Koester, 'Images are things that can be perceived by the senses, such as light and darkness, water, bread, a door, a shepherd, and a vine.'³⁷ Symbolic actions, such as footwashing and temple cleansing and miraculous signs have the characteristics of being perceptible to the senses. In Koester's and other scholars' definitions, only 'images that can be perceived by the senses' are considered to be symbols.³⁸ Although he recognises that a feature of these signs and actions is that they are sense-perceptible, his focus is not on the physical sense perception that John uses in these narratives but on the symbolic meaning of each sign and action. Similarly, in other studies on the imagery in John, scholars observe John's use of sense perception but place emphasis on the metaphorical level which is beyond the physicality of sense

³⁴ D. Lee, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel: The Interplay of Form and Meaning* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 12 n. 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

³⁶ U. C. Von Wahlde, review of D. Lee, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel: The Interplay of Form and Meaning*, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57 (1995): 818.

³⁷ C. R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

perception.³⁹ Study of John's symbolism and imagery shows the complexity of his use of sense perception. Since the focus is always on the deeper meaning of these symbolic actions or signs, the physical aspect of sense perception is often disregarded.

While Lee and Koester have investigated the use and function of symbolism in John's Gospel, Kanagaraj (1998) explores the mysticism of the Gospel, with regard to which sense perception is an important aspect. Like other scholars mentioned above, Kanagaraj observes that there are two levels of Johannine sight: the physical and the spiritual level. According to his view, the first level is 'to see at a superficial level, either by seeing signs or by hearing a testimony.' The second level is 'to perceive spiritually and intelligibly, which leads one to a commitment of faith in Christ and to testify about him.' He argues that the idea of two levels of seeing God is influenced by the mystical tradition of Judaism, the Merkabah vision.⁴⁰ This distinction implies that spiritual vision is superior to physical vision, for it leads to a commitment of faith. However, one might reasonably question whether John is really speaking about two types of seeing in a systematic way as Kanagaraj suggests. One could argue rather that, for John, physical sight is considered important in relation to spiritual insight. We shall explore whether John in fact values physical sense perception and even considers it to be an important step towards faith and communion with God.

D. Lee also published, in 2010, an article entitled, 'The Gospel of John and the Five Senses,'⁴¹ focusing on John's use of the five senses. She argues that the five senses in John operate on two levels, 'material and symbolic,' and that John uses them to enable the reader 'to grasp the incarnational shape of salvation through imagination.'⁴² She sees each of the five senses as 'a core image' to represent the 'life of faith' in John's narrative.⁴³ For example, she argues that in John 20 and 21, 'seeing'

³⁹ For various articles on this theme, see J. Frey et al., eds., *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006). Zimmermann's introduction on imagery in John is particularly helpful for it gives an overview of this topic in scholarship. R. Zimmermann, "Imagery in John: Opening up Paths into the Tangled Thicket of John's Figurative World," Pages 1–46 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language*.

⁴⁰ J. J. Kanagaraj, *'Mysticism' in the Gospel of John: An Inquiry into Its Background* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 218–219.

⁴¹ D. Lee, "The Gospel of John and the Five Senses," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129 (2010): 115–127.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 127.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 116.

refers to ‘signs surrounding the resurrection, which function as images of new life.’ What the disciples see, such as linen clothes, angels, the wounds of Jesus, fish and fire, ‘all point symbolically to Jesus’ risen presence and power in the community beyond Easter.’⁴⁴ Since her focus is on the implication of the five senses which serve as the ‘imaginative entry’ of the readers into the ‘symbolic universe’ of the Gospel, she pays scant attention to the physical use of sense perception, and thus overlooks the significance of what we see as John’s emphasis on physical sense perception. Another question about Lee’s approach is whether it is legitimate to call senses symbols or images. It is difficult to determine which acts of seeing or hearing ought to be seen as images and which as mundane. As she says herself, ‘hearing has a mundane as well as a metaphorical meaning (3:32).’⁴⁵ Nevertheless, her argument that the Johannine believers are to access the symbolic imagination through the five senses in order to have faith is a helpful observation on John’s use of sense perception in association with imagination.

The symbolic interpretation of sense perception is one of the major trends in Johannine scholarship. This has tended to categorise sense perception into two levels, the physical and the spiritual, and the focus has always been only on the significance and greater importance of spiritual or mystical ways of seeing. This present thesis explores whether, in John’s Gospel, sense perception operates on more than two levels. Different characters have different levels and degrees of insight and their insight can be developed and deepened. An overemphasis on the symbolic interpretation of sense perception may downplay the significance of the sensory faculties in John’s narrative. This thesis recognises the importance of the spiritual insight that has been much discussed by scholars but argues that, for John, physical sense perception is also important if one is to gain spiritual insight.

2.1.3. The Range of Senses

Sight and hearing are often discussed but few scholars have explored the full range of senses. There is a small but significant tradition of the scholarly study of the other senses in John. Ernst von Dobschütz (1929) was one of the first scholars of the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 120.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

New Testament to take an interest in the theory of the five senses.⁴⁶ He argued that the five senses are ‘an indispensable means’ for the expression of thoughts and ideas. But because he is interested only in the philosophical and religious thoughts that can be derived from the senses, he pays no attention to John’s physical use of sense perception. This dismissal of physical sense perception is picked up by Markus Barth (1946) in his book, *Der Augenzeuge: Eine Untersuchung über die Wahrnehmung des Menschensohnes durch die Apostel*, which he begins by stating that sense perception is the main focus of his study. Barth recognises the symbolic usage of sense perception but focuses on the physical reading of John’s verbs of sense perception in the context of historical eyewitness testimony.⁴⁷ He argues that the apostles’ hearing, seeing and touching are means of perceiving the Son of Man, Jesus Christ.⁴⁸ His study shows that a literal understanding of sense perception can also be of theological and religious significance. He also draws our attention to the interrelation of sense perception and testimony.

R. Hirsch-Luipold (2008) explores the theme of Johannine sense perception from a religious-philosophical approach in his article, ‘Die Religiös-Philosophische Literatur der frühen Kaiserzeit und das Neue Testament.’⁴⁹ He argues that the idea of the incarnation of the Logos makes the perception of God possible, so that ‘we can perceive it with all our senses.’⁵⁰ In his discussion, Hirsch-Luipold also includes the senses of taste, smell and touch.⁵¹ He argues that the nature and perception of God can be perceived, seen, heard and felt in Jesus Christ and that this becomes the basis of testimony.⁵² He also recognises that even though in John everything can be perceived physically, there is an ambiguity in John’s use of sense perception.⁵³ Conversely, his article shows that, even though his Gospel is full of ambiguity and imagery, John emphasises physical sense perception.

⁴⁶ E. von Dobschütz, "Die Fünf Sinne im Neuen Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 48 (1929): 378–411.

⁴⁷ M. Barth, *Der Augenzeuge: Eine Untersuchung über die Wahrnehmung des Menschensohnes durch die Apostel* (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1946).

⁴⁸ Barth, *Augenzeuge*, 41.

⁴⁹ R. Hirsch-Luipold, "Die Religiös-Philosophische Literatur der frühen Kaiserzeit und das Neue Testament," Pages 117–146 in *Religiöse Philosophie und Philosophische Religion der frühen Kaiserzeit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 117–146.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 104–144.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 144–145.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 145.

D. Lee in the article aforementioned, ‘The Gospel of John and the Five Senses,’⁵⁴ focuses on John’s use of the five senses but makes no reference to Hirsch-Luipold’s study. She observes that there is scant attention paid to some senses and that ‘the cooperation of all five senses together’ has not been sufficiently discussed.⁵⁵ She argues that the theological significance of the five senses is to be used as images that pertain to faith; they operate on two levels, material and symbolic, and it is through the imagination that readers can access the deeper meaning that the imagery of the five senses represent.⁵⁶

The theme of sense perception is explored by Hirsch-Luipold in his Habilitationsschrift which was completed two years after the article just mentioned, under the title, *Gott Wahrnehmen. Die Sinne im Johannesevangelium*.⁵⁷ He acknowledges that the study of the five senses in connection with faith in John’s Gospel is very limited and that very often the emphasis is on the high senses, sight and hearing. Thus he focuses his study on the lower senses: taste (the wine miracle in John 2:1-11), smell (the stench of the dead and the fragrance of the ointment in John 11:39, 12:3) and touch (touching the risen Christ in John 20), but also includes, in his first chapter, the senses of sight and hearing, with special reference to John 1:14, 18 and 14:1-14. He argues that the perception of God is made possible in the incarnate Logos.⁵⁸ Physical sense perception, which is emphasised in these passages, is significant in understanding John’s Christology, theology and soteriology. He argues that ‘sensory-physical perception (die sinnlich-körperlichen Wahrnehmung)’ plays a significant role in John and is used ‘as a way to faith (als Weg zum Glauben).’⁵⁹ John’s use of sense perception emphasises the fact that ‘God can be seen, heard and touched. Even his life-giving power can be smelled and tasted – in the incarnate Word, the only Son, who is himself God.’⁶⁰ Hirsch-Luipold gives detailed discussion of the significance of physical sense perception but he focuses most on the Greek

⁵⁴ Lee, "John".

⁵⁵ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 125.

⁵⁷ R. Hirsch-Luipold, *Gott Wahrnehmen. Die Sinne im Johannesevangelium* (Habilitationsschrift masch. Göttingen, 2010). I am grateful that, at the final stage of revising my thesis, Prof. Hirsch-Luipold kindly sent me a copy of his Habilitationsschrift, so that I could have a chance to consult his work and benefit from his research. His Habilitationsschrift will be published by Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen in 2014.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 344.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 346.

philosophical, religious-historical background and intellectual developments of the time and less on the Old Testament roots that we will explore in this thesis.⁶¹

This present thesis does not explore sense perception from a philosophical-religious point of view, as Dobschütz and Hirsch-Luipold do, nor does it focus mainly on how the five senses point to a ‘deeper reality’ as Lee does.⁶² This thesis explores the importance of physical sense perception which was noted by M. Barth and Hirsch-Luipold, but rather than searching for a Greek philosophical and religious background (Hirsch-Luipold), or suggesting that physical sense perception is associated with historical eyewitness testimony (M. Barth, Cullmann), it argues that John’s emphasis on physical sense perception is rooted in the Jewish Scriptures and influenced by Graeco-Roman rhetoric. It also agrees with Lee’s point that sense perception works through an appeal to the imagination, but argues that this effect is achieved through the use of the Graeco-Roman rhetorical technique of ἐνάργεια.

When we look back at the history of scholarship on sense perception in John, we see that there has been a continual interest in the topic. Scholars have approached it using diverse methodologies. The relationship between sight, hearing and faith has drawn particular attention. Calvin, Bultmann and Koester have argued that hearing is the way to true faith, while others have seen sight as another valid route. This thesis will show that both are considered by John to be important ways to faith and that there is no denigration of sense perception in John. We have noted that more publications on Johannine symbolism and imagery came with the rise of literary criticism. These works have focused mainly on the metaphorical level of sense perception. However, even if the Gospel of John has sometimes been regarded as a ‘spiritual gospel’ because it is full of symbolism and imagery, that need not mean, we argue, that sense perception in John always has to be understood figuratively. The history of scholarship also shows that the interpretation of Johannine sense perception is not confined to the most prominent senses of sight and hearing. The significance of the other senses has been recognised by M. Barth, E. Dobschütz, D. Lee and R. Hirsch-Luipold, who note the prominence of the five senses in John and observe that Johannine sense perception operates on two levels in relation to faith.

⁶¹ Ibid., 10.

⁶² Lee, "John": 125.

The literal use of sense perception is often related to the theme of testimony, as some scholars have observed. Barth and Cullmann, for example, have brought to our attention the relationship between sense perception and eyewitness testimony. However, there is another way to understand John's use of testimony, that is, in relation to revelation and knowledge of God. Since the theme of testimony is an important aspect of this thesis, we survey in the next section the theme of testimony in Johannine scholarship.

2.2. Testimony

Many monographs have discussed the themes of witness, testimony and trial in John. Théo Preiss (1954) successfully drew scholars' attention to the juridical aspect of Johannine thought.⁶³ He sees a 'cosmic trial' as being between God and the world, with Jesus as the central figure of the last judgment.⁶⁴ His work was the basis of a study by Josef Blank (1964), who made a detailed analysis of one aspect noted by Preiss: the judgment Jesus brings, which Blank related to the Gospel's eschatology and Christology.⁶⁵ A. E. Harvey in *Jesus on Trial* also sees the whole Gospel as an extended court-case in which Jesus is put on trial and several witnesses are called to bear testimony for him.⁶⁶ The readers are then to reach their own verdict based on these testimonies, i.e. to decide whether Jesus really is the Son of God. A year later, Allison Trites published *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (1977), in which he argues that the lawsuit motif in Isaiah 40–55 is likely to be the background of the trial motif of John's Gospel.⁶⁷ Robert Maccini's PhD dissertation was published under the title, *Her Testimony is True: Women as Witnesses According to John* (1996), but his main focus is on how the testimonies of women would have been perceived by a first-

⁶³ His work is mentioned in several important monographs on the trial theme, such as A. A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); S. Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity According to John* (Leiden: Brill, 1975); A. T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000).

⁶⁴ T. Preiss, "Justification in Johannine Thought," Pages 9–31 in *Life in Christ* (London: SCM, 1954), 17. Although Preiss did not use the term 'cosmic trial between God and the world,' scholars often attributed this thought to him, such as Trites, *Witness*, 112; Pancaro, *Law*, 7.

⁶⁵ J. Blank, *Krisis: Untersuchungen zur johanneischen Christologie und Eschatologie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus-Verlag, 1964).

⁶⁶ A. E. Harvey, *Jesus on Trial: A Study in the Fourth Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1976).

⁶⁷ Trites, *Witness*, 78.

century Jewish audience.⁶⁸ He argues that John's language of testimony is to be understood as historical eyewitness testimony; that is, that John's narrative is historically trustworthy and reliable.

The theme of trial is explored thoroughly by Andrew Lincoln in *Truth on Trial*,⁶⁹ investigating the theme of trial in the Fourth Gospel through three approaches: 1) literary, 2) historical and sociological, and 3) ideological or theological.⁷⁰ In his treatment of the trial motif, Lincoln acknowledges many important monographs on the trial theme⁷¹ and attempts to integrate some of the results of earlier works. Lincoln agrees with Preiss and Trites that the covenant lawsuit (רִיב pattern)⁷² of Isaiah 40–55 provides the resource for the Fourth Gospel's narrative and sees the trial of Jesus as a 'cosmic trial' between God and the world.⁷³ He argues that, 'The lawsuit between God and the nations becomes that between God and the world and provides the overarching framework, within which Israel's controversy with God is now seen to belong.'⁷⁴ Israel's lawsuit with God now forms a counterplot within the main plot and Israel becomes the representative of the world in the main plot. The Gospel of John is seen as an 'expanded trial, in which God in the form of Jesus is accused by Israel and he in turn accuses and judges Israel.'⁷⁵ But Lincoln develops this theme further by investigating the historical and social setting of the Johannine community and approaches this theme from a literary perspective in order to discover the theological significance of this Gospel.

These scholarly works have laid the foundation for the present thesis. This thesis agrees that the trial motif is rooted in the Old Testament and, in particular, in the book of Isaiah, but argues that the theme of 'testimony' is to be understood more broadly than in the judicial setting, for it also concerns the revelation of God. In

⁶⁸ R. G. Maccini, *Her Testimony Is True: Women as Witnesses According to John* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 2.

⁶⁹ Lincoln, *Truth*, 7. Cf. His article A. T. Lincoln, "Trials, Plots and the Narrative of the Fourth Gospel," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 17 (1995): 3–29.

⁷⁰ Lincoln, *Truth*, 7.

⁷¹ For his brief review of literature on the trial motif in scholarship, see *ibid.*, 4–6.

⁷² Herman Gunkel was the first to discover the lawsuit speech or the *Gerichtsrede*. Cited from M. De Roche, "Yahweh's Rib against Israel: A Reassessment of the So-Called 'Prophetic Lawsuit' in the Preexilic Prophets," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983): 563–574.

⁷³ Lincoln, *Truth*, 38.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷⁵ M. A. Matson, review of A. T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel*, *Restoration Quarterly* 45 (2003): 127.

John's Gospel, sense perception and testimony are used in close association, yet scholars who have focused on the Old Testament background to the testimony theme have underplayed the significance of sense perception in communicating and establishing that testimony. Moreover wherever they have emphasised sense perception and testimony, they have been arguing for the historicity of eyewitness events. This thesis, however, argues that sense perception has a primarily theological significance.

2.2.1. Testimony and Revelation

James Boice's *Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John* (1970) focuses our attention on two important terms in John, μαρτυρέω and μαρτυρία.⁷⁶ He argues that John's language of testimony is used to express a concept of revelation which has an Old Testament background.⁷⁷ He argues that 'Christ's witness to the Father is at the same time a revelation of the Father.'⁷⁸ He argues that Jesus reveals God not only through his words, but also through his acts and that John does not disparage the witness of the works.⁷⁹ Even though he examines the use of testimony in the Old Testament, he does not seem to observe the significant role of sense perception in giving testimony to God. Therefore, in accepting that Johannine testimony is primarily concerned with the revelation of God, this thesis explores the significance of sense perception in establishing that testimony. One of the findings this thesis will make is that sense perception is part of the Old Testament tradition of the revelation of God, a tradition on which John draws.

2.2.2. Rhetorical Purpose and Technique

Loren Johns and Douglas Miller (1994) in their article, 'The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence,' focus on the relation between signs and faith.⁸⁰ What is significant for us in their study is that they observe

⁷⁶ J. M. Boice, *Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), 165–167.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸⁰ L. L. Johns and D. B. Miller, "The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 56 (1994): 519–535.

that John employs judicial arguments to achieve his rhetorical purpose. They argue that 'work' and 'signs' are seen as evidence within these arguments to make the case for Jesus' identity.⁸¹ The rhetorical purpose of the Fourth Gospel is noted by Robert Maccini in his above-mentioned work. He builds on John's purpose statement and argues that John's rhetorical purpose is to persuade his readers to believe Jesus' identity as John has claimed.⁸² While most scholars place John's use of testimony in a Jewish context, Sheppard (1999) places the Gospel in the Roman legal context and argues from the functional similarities between the Gospel and the classical handbooks of forensic rhetoric.⁸³ Her study shows that the possible sources of Johannine language of testimony are not confined to Jewish literature. Graeco-Roman legal influence on John's legal language may also be significant.

Lincoln, in *Truth on Trial*, also observes connections between the lawsuit motif and the rhetorical aspects of the narrative that are consistent with the persuasive aim of the narrative.⁸⁴ Correctly, we think, he sees the whole narrative as testimony in a trial. It is 'primarily calling for a judgment about the present validity of beliefs about Jesus' but it also aims to 'convince people about the verdict that is already in and that has present significance for them.'⁸⁵ Lincoln also notes John's juxtaposition of sense perception and testimony and explores this theme further in his article, 'The Beloved Disciple as Eyewitness and the Fourth Gospel as Witness.'⁸⁶ He argues that the Beloved Disciple's eyewitness testimony is a literary device, although he sees that as not necessarily undermining the integrity of the eyewitness testimony of the Fourth Gospel.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Ibid., 527.

⁸² Maccini, *Testimony*, 19.

⁸³ B. M. Sheppard, "The Gospel of John: A Roman Legal and Rhetorical Perspective" (Ph.D. diss., University of Sheffield Press, 1999).

⁸⁴ Lincoln, *Truth*, 143.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ A. T. Lincoln, "The Beloved Disciple as Eyewitness and the Fourth Gospel as Witness," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 24 (2002): 3–26.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 3.

While Lincoln argues that John's eyewitnessing language is a rhetorical technique, W. Salier (2004) in *The Rhetorical Impact of the Semeia in the Gospel of John* sees the σημεῖα themselves as a device to achieve John's rhetorical purpose.⁸⁸ He argues that the Johannine σημεῖα should be understood in the context of the trial motif and their rhetorical impact.⁸⁹ The signs of Jesus are to be seen as evidence to persuade the reader of the truth of Jesus' claim. The sign narratives serve the purpose of drawing the readers into the drama and they are 'forced to make a decision on the evidence presented in the signs.'⁹⁰ Salier also compares Jesus' signs with Moses' signs in the Exodus and argues that the combination of signs and faith is always presented positively in John.⁹¹ His study offers a detailed analysis of Johannine signs from a literary and rhetorical perspective. He shows that John makes an effort to 'align the reader sympathetically with the characters and situations involved so that the impact of the incidents is not only acknowledged but also felt.'⁹² This attempt to arouse emotional involvement is a common practice in Graeco-Roman rhetoric and is often related to the rhetoric of sense perception.

George Parsenios' work, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif* again finds its legal setting in the Graeco-Roman context.⁹³ He integrates rhetoric and drama in the Johannine lawsuit motif and aims to show that the 'judicial character of John is shaped by the language and procedures of ancient rhetoric and ancient tragedy.'⁹⁴ He argues that the legal use of 'seeking' in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and the 'seeking' in John are similar.⁹⁵ In this regard, the signs of Jesus are then seen as the 'evidence' of Jesus' identity and his innocence. His study offers a new way of looking at the relationship between signs and faith, that is, as a type of 'proof' (πίστις).⁹⁶ When signs are used in a juridical context, they are evidence 'involved in the process of persuasion.'⁹⁷ Thus they have a positive role in relation to faith.

⁸⁸ W. H. Salier, *The Rhetorical Impact of the Semeia in the Gospel of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

⁸⁹ Ibid., 172.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 174.

⁹¹ Ibid., 75.

⁹² Ibid., 172.

⁹³ G. L. Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

⁹⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 49.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 95.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 97.

As regard to the rhetorical purpose, scholars have diverse emphases. Some scholars seem to think the rhetorical purpose is primarily to prove the identity of Jesus: the readers are placed in the position of the jury and forced to make a judgment based on the signs presented to them. Others think that it is to draw readers in and persuade them to believe the reality and implication of what they are ‘shown’: the readers are placed in the position of witnesses. This thesis will argue that the latter is the primary purpose, although the former is not excluded entirely.

Both Lincoln’s and Salier’s discussions on rhetorical techniques in the context of testimony are helpful. This thesis builds on their work by exploring a dimension of the rhetoric of sense perception that has not been discussed in this connection, namely the significance of ἐνάργεια. This was important in Graeco-Roman rhetoric, not least in a judicial context, and thus this thesis develops an aspect of the Graeco-Roman character of John’s motif of testimony.

The history of scholarship shows that it is widely acknowledged that the juridical metaphor is prominent in John. Most scholars would see the whole Gospel as a trial and see the ריב pattern in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Isaiah, as a literary form employed by John. Since the emphasis there is on the theological conception and literary presentation of the ‘trial,’ derived from the Jewish Scripture, not much attention has been paid to the Graeco-Roman influence. This is where Sheppard’s and Parsenios’ contributions become particularly significant for they draw our attention to Greek rhetoric as another possible background of John’s lawsuit motif. In Greek rhetoric, sense perception is often used in the context of testimony. The prominence of the appeal to the senses in Graeco-Roman rhetorical training is significant in understanding the role of sense perception in testimony.

2.3. Sense Perception and Testimony

Some scholars note John’s use of ‘seeing and believing’ and see those terms as eyewitness language but not many investigate the relationship between sense

perception and testimony in detail.⁹⁸ De la Potterie is one of the few scholars to explore this theme. He argues that although eyewitness testimony in John is often linked to sight, the relationship between vision and testimony is not the same everywhere. He argues that what Jesus sees and witnesses to are the same thing (John 3:32). His witness refers to what he has seen when with the Father – this witness is direct revelation. In contrast, what human witnesses see and testify are different things: ‘what they have seen leads to knowledge of something else unseen, to which they bear witness.’⁹⁹ One example he gives is of the Baptist: what he sees is the spirit coming down on Jesus, but what he testifies to is Jesus’ messiahship.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, de la Potterie emphasises that physical sight is important in relation to the role of eyewitnesses. His study is significant for he observes the importance of physical sight, which is a requirement of witnessing. He also recognises the complications of sense perception and argues that it has to be understood on a physical and spiritual level – ‘a vision of an event which has become a sign, leading to faith.’¹⁰¹

Lincoln, in his article discussed above, argues that John’s use of ‘seeing and believing’ is a literary device and that his use of testimony should be placed in the framework of the lawsuit metaphor.¹⁰² It is to be understood symbolically rather than physically. For example, the communal seeing in John 1:14 cannot be seen as ‘the everyday language of physical seeing’ but ‘the witness borne by faith to Jesus as the incarnate Logos’¹⁰³ In agreement with Petersen, he argues that ‘beholding’ is not ‘observing,’ because only some people ‘beheld’ the ‘glory’ of ‘the Word.’ He argues further that this seeing is associated with ‘receiving (1.11, 12, 16), knowing (1.10) and believing (1.7, 12) – with which it is virtually synonymous.’¹⁰⁴ It is right to say that sight is often related to these words, but that does not mean that John uses these verbs without difference in nuance. Lincoln rightly observes that some Johannine seeing such as the claim of the believing community, ‘we have seen his glory’ and the

⁹⁸ Maccini, *Testimony*, 249; D. Tovey, *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 143; B. Byrne, "The Faith of the Beloved Disciple and the Community in John 20," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 7 (1985): 83–97.

⁹⁹ I. de la Potterie, "La Notion de Témoignage dans Saint Jean," Pages 193–208 in *Sacra Pagina: Miscellanea Biblica Congressus Internationalis Catholici de re Biblica* (eds. J. Coppens, A. Descamps and E. Massaux; Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1959), 197.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁰² Lincoln, "Eyewitness": 10.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Baptist's statement, 'I have seen and testified,' is not mere physical seeing¹⁰⁵ but he dismisses too quickly the significance of physical sense perception.

Hirsch-Luipold also notes John's use of sense perception with historical eyewitness testimony, but does not go into great detail. He argues that it is 'through the perception of the incarnate Logos' that we can have faith in God. Jesus is where the revelation of God happens. Since Jesus belongs to the historical past, however, and cannot be perceived directly, it is only through the testimony of the disciples that this 'direct encounter with God in Christ' can take place.¹⁰⁶ So, not only are the sense-perceptible signs to be seen as testimony to Jesus, but the whole Gospel is a testimony to Jesus in whom we find the revelation of God. It is through seeing the signs of Jesus and hearing the words of Jesus that one comes to know God. Thus testimony merges both divine revelation and human witnessing.¹⁰⁷ In his treatment of witnesses, Hirsch-Luipold does not make fine distinctions between the perceptions of different witnesses. Nevertheless, his work is significant for the study of Johannine sense perception for it takes account of the less discussed senses, taste, smell and touch, and their theological significance. His work also places value on the significance of a literal interpretation of sense perception in relation to faith and religious thought.

The history of scholarship on sense perception and testimony has raised a cluster of questions. Does John have a theology of sense perception, which emphasises both physical and spiritual sense perception? Are we to understand the Johannine trial motif in a Jewish or a Roman context? Are we to regard the combination of seeing and testifying as eyewitness language or simply as a literary device? Can John's use of testimony be seen in a broader context, which includes the juridical sense but goes beyond that, to the revelation of God? Our study shows that when scholars discuss sense perception and testimony, their focus is on whether they are to be understood as referring to historical eyewitness account or not. This thesis, however, will argue that the combination of sense perception and testimony is to be understood in the broader context of revelation. In the Old Testament, God's revelation of knowledge is often expressed through the language of testimony. This

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁶ Hirsch-Luipold, *Sinne*, 89.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

kind of testimony has the characteristics of being perceptible to human senses. This is likely to be the background to John's use of sense perception and testimony.

3. The Aim and the Structure of the Thesis

3.1. The Aim of the Thesis

This thesis aims to show how sense perception and testimony are used together in John to draw the readers into the narrative so that they become witnesses in an emotionally engaged way. In pursuing this question, there are three distinctive emphases.

Firstly, scholarship has shown that John's use of testimony is related to his rhetorical purpose (cf. Lincoln, Parnenios). John's use of sense perception in persuasion, however, is not widely researched. My thesis seeks to show that John's use of sense perception significantly contributes to the persuasive power of testimony in his Gospel.

Secondly, my thesis argues that John's use of testimony is not confined to a juridical frame, but is used in a broader context to include the revelation of God. In the Old Testament, sense perception is important in divine revelation and the emotional impact of the divine presence. This revelation is often expressed in the language of testimony. The main issue in John is how Jesus reveals God. There is a similarity here to what we often find in the Old Testament, where God and his will are revealed in sense-perceptible ways. Thus, we argue that John is following Jewish tradition in which sense perception and testimony operate together in the theology of revelation.

Thirdly, scholars often under-rate John's emphasis on the physicality of sense perception. They recognise that John uses metaphors and symbolism to convey theological ideas and that ambiguity and double meaning are significant features of his Gospel, so they focus on the spiritual level of sense perception. This thesis aims to show, however, that in John's use of sense perception as a means of testimony, physical sense perception is a primary focus.

This thesis will argue that John uses sense perception and testimony together to engage his readers through his vivid narrative. This particular use of the language of sense perception for testimony is rooted in the Jewish tradition. To this, John applies the rhetorical technique of ἐνάργεια to make his narrative vivid. In this he has a rhetorical purpose: to strengthen the faith of his readers, so that they are all the more ready to bear testimony themselves.

3.2. The Structure of the Thesis

There are two parts to this thesis. Part I is a background study of the Gospel of John, which gives the readers an overview of John's use of sense perception and testimony, and the possible backgrounds to John's combination of both. The overview of John's use of sense perception in Chapter 2 acts as a guide and control for the selection of material in later chapters. It also lays out problems with sense perception and defines the use of 'testimony' in this dissertation. In Chapter 3, we argue that John writes for Christians in order to strengthen their faith. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss what we consider to be the most significant background material for engaging with John's theological use of the rhetoric of sense perception. The theological significance of sense perception in testimony about God in the Old Testament is the focus of Chapter 4 while, in Chapter 5, we turn to the Graeco-Roman rhetorical concept of ἐνάργεια (vividness) and its use in persuasion, particularly, for our purposes, in the setting of the legal trial.

Part II focuses on the use of sense perception and testimony in the Gospel of John. In Chapter 6, we lay the foundation for John's theology of sense perception. This chapter draws out the theological underpinning of physical sense perception in John through an analysis of Jesus' perception and the emphatic use of sense perception and testimony together in relation to two key witnesses, the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple. In Chapter 7, we look at testimony during Jesus' public ministry and see that John emphasises physical sense perception through signs and other testimonies, such as that of the Samaritan woman and in the anointing at Bethany. In Chapter 8, we argue that sense perception continues to be important for John even in the context of Jesus' absence and the coming of the Spirit.

In conclusion, we argue that John uses the language of sense perception along with the theme of testimony to draw the readers into the narrative so that they are emotionally involved. The combination of sense perception and testimony is rooted in Jewish Scripture in which God's revelation is often expressed in a sense-perceptible way and depicted in the language of testimony. John takes up this usage and appeals to the persuasive power of sense perception, which he has also observed in Hellenistic philosophy and oratory, in order to achieve his rhetorical purpose.

Chapter 2: An Overview of Sense Perception and Testimony

This chapter provides a provisional outline of the use and function of the language of sense perception and testimony in the Gospel of John. This explores the possibilities that will be discussed in Chapter 4 and in exegesis. We start with an overview of sense perception and testimony in John, which shows that the relationship between them is significant. This invites further exploration of the two interrelated areas.

Theologically, John assumes that God is knowable through the senses; rhetorically, he heightens that effect in the narrative in order to engage his readers emotionally in the testimony to God through Jesus' work and words. The identification of these two aspects guides the selection of primary source material in Chapter 4 (Jewish Scriptures) and Chapter 5 (Graeco-Roman texts) respectively, while the patterns of emphasis and significance within the Gospel shape the discussion of John in Part II of this dissertation. In order to clarify the issues and problems that underlie this study, the second part of this chapter draws attention to the complexity in John's use of sense perception, while the last part defines the concept of 'testimony' for the purpose of this thesis.

1. Statistics and Distribution

The vocabulary of sense perception and testimony occurs throughout the Gospel but is most prominent in the first twelve chapters. The chart below offers some simple statistics concerning the use of verbs of sense perception and testimony.

	John 1	John 2-12	John 13-17	John 18-21	Total
Sight (ἀναβλέπω, βλέπω, ἐμβλέπω, ἰδοῦ, θεάομαι, θεωρέω, ὁράω)	17	66	18	23	124
Hearing (ἀκούω)	2	48	4	5	59
Taste (ὄζω)	0	1	0	0	1
Taste (γεύομαι)	0	2	0	0	2
Touch (ἅπτω, βάλλω) ¹	0	0	0	4	4
Testimony (μαρτυρέω, μαρτυρία)	7	31	3	6	47
Total	26	148	25	38	237

This table gives an initial indication that John's use of verbs of sense perception and testimony is significant, above all in the Prologue and Public Ministry, but also in the Passion and Resurrection, where there is a high density of both vocabularies. There are some limitations to this presentation of the statistics. This count does not include passages where sense perception and testimony are implied, but only those in which verbs of sense perception and testimony are actually used. Secondly, it includes some passages where verbs of sense perception are used but do not evoke a strong sensory reading (e.g. John 3:3; 4:19, 47; 7:52). Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the figures do not give a detailed picture of the way the themes work together. For this, we must analyse the narrative in more detail.

1.1. The Prologue (John 1:1-18)

In the Prologue, John introduces the divinity of the Logos in terms that immediately appeal to vision: he (it) is not only the life, but the light of all people (John 1:5). Yet the term 'light' is complex because, although it is quintessentially a visual term, it also carries ethical, theological, and supra-sensory cosmic connotations here. Immediately after this, the language of testimony is used prominently to articulate the main mission of 'John.'² That is, he is to come 'for the purpose of

¹ The verb βάλλω has several meanings, and is used quite often by John, but it is only in John 20:25-27 that it refers to 'touch.' It is used three times there.

² Even though from the later passage, we know that 'John' refers to the Baptist, whether 'John' refers to the Baptist or the Evangelist is not initially clear in this verse. Collins argues that 'John' is not identified as the Baptist at this stage. He is identified by his mission. R. F. Collins, "From John to the Beloved Disciple: An Essay on Johannine Characters," *Interpretation* 49 (1995): 359-369, at 361. Williams thinks that the Baptist's testimony is included in the confession of the Johannine

testimony, in order that he might testify (εἰς μαρτυρίαν ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ) to the light' (John 1:7; cf. John 1:8, 15). Testimony to the pre-incarnate light is thus bound up in the mission of 'John.'

As the Prologue proceeds, testimony to the light becomes associated with the incarnation of the Logos and the testimony by the community who share the narrator's viewpoint. Thus, half-way through the Prologue, the 'true light, which enlightens everyone' becomes personal: 'the world did not know *him* (αὐτόν)' (John 1:10). This leads on to the summary of the incarnation: 'the Word became flesh and tabernacled among *us*' (John 1:14). It is at this point that the 'we' of the believing community can affirm: 'we have seen (ἐθεασάμεθα) his glory.' The third-person testimony of 'John' to the pre-incarnate light is thus taken up in the first-person plural claim to have beheld the incarnate glory tabernacling in their midst. The imagery of 'tabernacling' together with 'glory' continues the idea of 'light,' but articulates it through imagery drawn from the Old Testament where God's visible glory came to dwell in the Tabernacle. It is not clear how that is realised in the Gospel at this stage, but the glimpse that is given in the Prologue underscores the vivid, personal, eyewitness experience of the believers. What 'John' testifies to has also been seen by the believing community.

The theme of testimony continues by restating the role of 'John' in testifying: 'John testified (μαρτυρεῖ) to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me'" (John 1:15). It is after this testimony that Jesus Christ is introduced by name (John 1:16–18). With Jesus, the language of 'testimony' is not used, but the theme continues. His main mission is to make God known and his capacity to fulfill this is rooted in the fact that 'no one has ever seen (ἐώρακεν) God' – except him (John 1:18). Coming immediately after a syncretism between Moses and Jesus and of what was given through them, this assertion that 'no one has ever seen God' is a denial of Moses' vision of God at Sinai (cf. John 5:37). Thus, for the narrator, the only one who can 'exegete' God is Jesus, who 'is in the bosom of the Father' (John 1:18).

community in John 1:14. C. H. Williams, "John (the Baptist): The In-Between Witness," Pages 46–60 in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John* (eds. S. A. Hunt, D. F. Tolmie and R. Zimmermann; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 49.

The significance of sense perception and testimony is thus made explicit in the Prologue, but it operates at different levels. There is sensory language for the Logos who is pre-incarnate light, to which 'John' testifies; there is sensory language for how the community beholds the incarnate Logos, and there is sensory language for the relationship of Jesus to God. The Prologue shows a continuity of these kinds of sensory perception, without equating them or limiting them to the physical senses alone. It draws on themes from the Old Testament: light and darkness (Isa 9:1–2) (a major theme in Isaiah's account of revelation and salvation);³ the glory beheld in the Tabernacle (Exod 40:34–38); and the Sinai theophany (Exod 19–20; 33–34). However, these personal and vivid examples are present only in the narrative context of the testimony to Jesus, and his 'exegesis' of God.

1.2. The Testimony of the Baptist and the First Disciples (John 1:19–51)

The testimonies of the Baptist and the first disciples have often been interpreted in a juridical context by Johannine scholarship. Some scholars base their interpretation on the extensive use of the language of testimony which is repeated throughout the Gospel and the fact that the theological significance of testimony is already indicated in the Prologue (John 1:7, 8, 15).⁴ That the call of the first disciples (John 1:35–51) follows immediately after the testimony of the Baptist (John 1:19–34) also suggests that John places the call of those disciples in a juridical context.⁵ Some build on these observations and see the whole Gospel as an extended trial where several witnesses are called to voice their testimony in a court-room setting.⁶ In this regard, their function is to testify to Jesus' identity and defend him from his opponents or non-believers. This reading of the testimony of the Baptist and the first disciples in a juridical context is significant and the juridical theme is certainly emphasised by the author. But there is a broader interpretation of the theme of testimony, that is, we can see it as part of the revelation of God. This does not exclude

³ This will be explored further in Chapter 4 and Part II. Cf. C. H. Williams, "He Saw His Glory and Spoke About Him": The Testimony of Isaiah and Johannine Christology," Pages 53–80 in *Honouring the Past and Shaping the Future* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2003).

⁴ J. D. Charles, "Will the Court Please Call in the Prime Witness?": John 1:29–34 and the 'Witness'-Motif," *Trinity Journal* 10 (1989): 71–83.

⁵ Harvey, *Trial*, 33.

⁶ Preiss, "Justification," 9–31.

the juridical notion of testimony.⁷ The function of John's witnesses is then to testify about God in Jesus. This is similar to what we find in Isaiah, where the witnesses are called to testify to the God who reveals himself through his prophetic words and mighty deeds.

The Testimonium (John 1:19–51) continues the theme of privileged witness that began in the Prologue: the Baptist gives the testimony for which he was sent from God (John 1:31–32, cf. 1:6–8). The narrator first combines the language of sense perception with the language of testimony ('John testified (ἐμαρτύρησεν) saying, "I have seen (τεθέαμαι)"' John 1:32), then the Baptist himself uses sense perception and testimony together ('I myself have seen and have testified (έώρακα καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα)' John 1:34). However, this is a complex kind of testimony through sense perception, for the Baptist does not give a physical description of what he sees, but rather enigmatic, interpretative summaries that themselves require insight and interpretation (John 1:29–30, 33).

In the ensuing account of the testimony of the first disciples, the vocabulary of testimony is not used but the theme of testimony is continued. Theologically sense perception is important here: the Baptist's disciples follow Jesus initially because they *hear* him speaking (John 1:37) but then there is a chain of testimonies marked by a pattern of Jesus himself *seeing* or *looking at* those who follow or are brought to him (John 1:38, 42, 47, 50), in order to initiate the start of their relationship to him as his disciples. Jesus saw (θεασάμενος) the disciples following him (John 1:38) and he invited them to 'come and see' (ἔρχεσθε καὶ ὄψεσθε), and so the disciples came and saw (εἶδαν) where Jesus was staying and remained (ἔμειναν) with him (John 1:39). Thus they are invited to become witnesses to him, through their physical proximity to him.

When Andrew brings Simon to Jesus, Jesus looks at (ἐμβλέψας) him and names him Peter (John 1:42). Philip is the first disciple whom Jesus calls to follow him.⁸ Jesus initiates the call of Philip without a mediating witness;⁹ however, after his

⁷ Boice, *Witness*, 15.

⁸ L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972), 161; C. S. Keener, *The Gospel of John* (2 vols.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:480; R.

encounter with Jesus, Philip becomes a witness to Nathanael.¹⁰ Philip finds Nathanael (as Jesus found him, Philip) and invites him to ‘come and see (ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε)’ Jesus (John 1:46). Nathanael accepts the invitation and decides to come and see Jesus but, ironically, Nathanael has already been seen twice by Jesus.¹¹ Jesus saw (εἶδον) Nathanael under the fig tree before Philip called him (John 1:48) and saw (εἶδον) him again when Nathanael was coming toward him (John 1:47). What these disciples see and know is partial at this stage: they recognise Jesus as the Christ and apply traditional messianic titles to him, but the string of testimonies closes with Jesus pointing out how inadequate Nathanael’s perception is, and promising a future vision far more impressive: ‘Do you believe because I told you, that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these ... Very truly I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man’ (John 1:50–51). This evokes the theophany of Jacob’s ladder (Gen 28).

The extensive use of sense perception and the chain reactions of hearing, seeing and being-seen make the whole scene vivid. The readers are drawn into the narrative through different perspectives. Not only can they ‘see’ through what the characters see, but the dialogues in between the narratives also help them to ‘hear’ along with the characters. Even though there are some ambiguities in what they perceive and how they interpret it, this does not denigrate the vivid effect of the rhetorical power of the physical senses, conveying a sense of immediate presence.

In this section, again we see an integral relationship between sense perception and testimony, both when the vocabularies are used together (John 1:29–34) and where the themes are related (John 1:35–51). As in the Prologue, sense perception is complex. Different viewers have different understandings of what they see and perceive but, for their knowledge of God, it is important for them both to see and to

Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (3 vols.; London: Burns & Oates, 1968), 1:313. But Schnackenburg thinks that this verse is an addition by redaction. Carson argues that it is Andrew who brings Philip to Jesus since everyone else comes to Jesus in this way, but the text itself does not support this view. Cf. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 157.

⁹ In the Synoptic tradition, Andrew and Peter are the first two to be called (Matt 4:18; Mark 1:16) and then James and John (Matt 4:21; Mark 1:19). Compared to the Synoptics, John’s emphasis is on the importance of bearing witness.

¹⁰ Keener, *John*, 1:480.

¹¹ R. F. Collins, *John and His Witness* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), 89.

be seen physically. The Testimonium ends with a use of the rhetorical power of sense perception in a reference to Old Testament material (Jacob's ladder, Gen 28) promised to be made sensually vivid in and through the visible 'Son of Man.' The rhetorical power of sense perception makes the whole scene vivid before the readers.

1.3. The Public Ministry of Jesus (John 2–12)

The signs of Jesus constitute the major part of Jesus' public ministry. There is some debate about the understanding of the signs, which arises in the context of wider discussion about the relative prominence of the recognition motif and the trial motif: the former interprets the signs of Jesus as evidence of Jesus' identity,¹² the latter as evidence of Jesus' innocence.¹³ Salier places the Johannine signs in the context of the trial motif and argues that the signs can be regarded as 'palpable proof to decide whether Jesus is guilty or innocent,' but they can also 'offer testimony to the truth of Jesus' claims concerning himself.'¹⁴ These observations are both apposite, but it is the latter view that this dissertation focuses on. The signs can be viewed as belonging to a broader category of testimony to the Jesus in whom the revelation of God is found. In this regard, the sense-perceptible aspect of the signs is emphasised, just as we find in the Old Testament that God's deeds and prophetic symbolic actions are all sense-perceptible and offer testimony to God's revelation. The book of Isaiah is particularly relevant, not only because it is often regarded as the background to the Johannine trial motif,¹⁵ but also because in that context we find the combination of sense perception and testimony (eg. Isa 43:8–10). In addition, the wonders of God in the Exodus, and the sign-acts of the prophets of the Old Testament, may inform John's theology and his presentation of Jesus' signs.

The value of signs to faith has sometimes been doubted in scholarship and this point will be argued more fully in Part II. However, it must be pointed out here that notwithstanding the fact that John talks of diverse responses to Jesus' signs, he makes great efforts to accentuate their sensory appeal to the readers of his Gospel. Jesus'

¹² Larsen argues that the primary role of signs is to be found in the recognition motif. K. Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 112.

¹³ Salier argues that 'sign' is a term for evidence in Greek and Latin rhetoric. Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 34–38. Cf. Johns and Miller, "Signs": 522; Harvey, *Trial*, 97.

¹⁴ Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 172.

¹⁵ Trites, *Witness*, 78.

signs are typically followed by extended discourses that reflect and develop their narratives. Sign narratives tend to appeal to the senses, while the language of testimony is confined to the discourses; the themes, however, are interwoven. We look at some examples.

First, in the miracle of changing water into wine, we find the use of the sense of taste: ‘the steward tasted (ἐγεύσατο) the water that had become wine’ (John 2:9). This is significant, for this would have been the only way, and would be conclusive evidence that the water had turned into wine. Secondly, in the miracle of healing the blind man, we see extensive use of verbs of sight such as βλέπω, θεάομαι, and ἀνάβλέπω (John 9:1–13). The statement that Jesus ‘spread the mud on the man’s eyes’ (John 9:6) shows physical contact, as does the act of washing (John 9:7, 11). In the last miracle, John appeals to the senses of smell, hearing, touch and sight. Martha says to Jesus, ‘Lord, already there is a stench (ὀζει) because he has been dead four days’ (John 11:39). Despite the fact that Lazarus has been dead for four days, when he heard Jesus’ voice, he came out of the tomb. Many ‘Jews’ ‘who had come with Mary and had seen (θεασάμενοι) what Jesus did, believed in him’ (John 11:45). These examples show John’s emphasis on sense perception, crucial in his theme of testimony.

The theological significance of signs is declared explicitly by Jesus himself who says that his works¹⁶ testify about him, that the Father sent him (John 5:36). Just as, in the Old Testament, God’s mighty deeds in the Exodus and in prophetic symbolic actions testify to God’s power and reveal God, Jesus’ signs testify to Jesus and reveal God in him. However, just as not everyone who witnessed the Exodus miracles and symbolic actions had insight into the knowledge of God, so Jesus’ signs are not perceived correctly by everyone. Both the Exodus miracles and Johannine signs are mediated forms of divine revelation that require faith and insight on the part of those to whom they are shown. With the Israelites, the wonders of the Exodus elicit faith, but with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, their hearts are hardened, and hence, they do not understand. The prophetic sign-acts always require interpretation and

¹⁶ The work of Jesus is a broader term than the language of ‘signs,’ but it certainly includes his signs. Cf. Johns and Miller, “Signs”: 525. For discussion on the work of Jesus as witness, see U. C. Von Wahlde, “The Witnesses to Jesus in John 5:31–40 and Belief in the Fourth Gospel,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43 (1981): 385–404, at 397–398.

sometimes act out God's judgment against Israel. John himself draws attention to the Old Testament theme of hardening to explain why people fail to believe in Jesus, even though he performed so many signs (John 12:37) by quoting the Isaianic hardening motif (John 12:40–1). This marks the conclusion of the account of Jesus' signs.

As we saw in the Prologue and the testimony of the Baptist and the first disciples, John seems to be drawing on Old Testament material that engages the senses in perceiving knowledge of God. He does this in a nuanced way, allowing for various levels of insight and for different kinds of appeal to the senses, from deeds physically enacted before the eyes to the metaphorical description of Jesus as the 'light' (John 8:12; cf. 12:35–36). Throughout, however, the use of sense perception underscores how Jesus makes the revelation of God intensely and vividly present to his disciples in his public ministry. This later becomes the basis for their testimony about Jesus.

1.4. The Farewell Discourse (John 13–17)

In the Farewell Discourse, although the use of language of sense perception and testimony is less pervasive than in the rest of the Gospel, the themes come together prominently at key points in ways that emphasise their continuing importance for the post-Easter community. The Farewell Discourse begins with a symbolic action, footwashing. Other symbolic acts have already taken place in Jesus' ministry (e.g. the cleansing of the Temple; the anointing at Bethany), but unlike those, the footwashing is performed so that the disciples can imitate and practise it. The type of imitation envisaged is unlikely to be a liturgical rite, for nowhere else in the New Testament is it suggested that footwashing should be institutionalised.¹⁷ What the disciples are to imitate is the example of humility and sacrificial love that Jesus has set them.¹⁸

The Farewell Discourses are the bridge to the period when the disciples must testify to the incarnate Christ, after he has departed from them (John 15:27), and they

¹⁷ Carson, *John*, 468.

¹⁸ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 236; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1966), 2:569; F. J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 376.

emphasise the importance of the gift of the Paraclete to ‘lead [the disciples] into all truth’ (John 16:13). Jesus even says that it is better that he goes, otherwise the Paraclete will not come to the disciples (John 16:7). This does not mean that Jesus denigrates the value of sense perception in his earthly ministry. Rather, he opens this account of the significance of the Paraclete by giving special prominence to the vision of God made present in the incarnate Jesus. It is here, in the conversation with Philip which introduces the discussion of the Paraclete, that Jesus directly and explicitly presents the Father to the eyes of the disciples. Here ‘knowing’ and ‘seeing’ the Father are combined, and anchored in knowing and seeing Jesus through being ‘with’ him (John 14:7–11). The Paraclete simply enables and enhances that ongoing presence and furthermore ‘reminds’ the disciples of all that Jesus said while he was with them (John 14:26). This role of ‘reminding’ picks up a theme that was already highlighted in Jesus’ ministry, where the narrator promised that the disciples would subsequently remember and understand things that they saw and heard. His words about raising the Temple again, for example, they would remember and understand as referring to the Temple of his body (John 2:22). His entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, in accordance with the scriptures, they did not ‘know’ at the time but ‘remembered’ when he was later glorified (John 12:16). Similarly, in Deuteronomy the Israelites are taught to ‘remember’ the wonders at the Exodus, so as to ground their life in obedience to the commandments. It is divine actions once seen with the eyes, and later vividly remembered, that ought to make it possible to know God in such a way as to keep his commandments.

The language of sense perception and testimony is less prominent in this part of the gospel than in the earlier and later parts, yet the themes continue to be significant. Once again, John approaches his account of Jesus’ ministry in ways that evoke Old Testament theology of God revealing himself to the senses: through prophetic symbolic actions, theophanies, and the call to remembrance of God’s words and deeds. But he shapes it in a way that focuses sense perception vividly on Jesus’ actions and person. The symbolic action of footwashing given for imitation, together with Jesus’ statement that ‘he who has seen me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9), underpin the function of the Paraclete and help the disciples bear testimony to Jesus after his departure.

1.5. The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus (John 18–21)

When we come to the passion and resurrection of Jesus in John 18–21, we again notice the juxtaposition of sense perception and testimony. This is where the trial of Jesus is recorded. He was put on trial and crucified, was buried and raised and ascended to God. Even though this is where the juridical theme should be most prominent, the focus of Jesus' trial is not on Jesus' innocence, but on his mission: he came to testify (μαρτυρήσω) to the truth (John 18:37). This shifts the focus of the theme of testimony even within the juridical setting to a broader category concerning truth.

The combination of sense perception and testimony is found in John 19:35, 'He who saw this has testified (ἑώρακὼς μεμαρτύρηκεν) so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.' This verse is significant because it turns to address the readers of the Gospel, and thus suggests the emphases with which the Gospel itself should be read. It not only combines sense perception and testimony, but also includes the theme of testimony to truth, as we saw in John 18:37. This verse also points out that faith is closely related to sense perception. This juxtaposition of seeing and testifying reminds us of John the Baptist's statement at the beginning of the Gospel, 'And I myself have seen and have testified (ἑώρακα καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα) that this is the Son of God' (John 1:34). Thus the witness of John the Baptist as the first eyewitness of Jesus within the narrative is echoed by the witness of the 'beloved disciple' conveyed by (and perhaps elided with) the voice of John the Evangelist for the readers of the narrative. The emphasis on the combination of sense perception and testimony is made crucial to the internal and external narrative audience alike.

In the resurrection narrative (John 20), the verbal form of 'sight' occurs 13 times. This is remarkable in a short chapter. Although the language of testimony is not used in this chapter, sense perception remains crucial in the context of testimony. Firstly, Mary, after seeing the risen Jesus, goes and says to the disciples: 'I have seen the Lord' (John 20:18). This is presented as her testimony to the resurrection of Jesus. Similarly, after the disciples see Jesus, they tell Thomas, 'We have seen the Lord' (John 20:25). They also testify to Jesus' resurrection. Thomas seeks to touch the body

of Jesus and Jesus allows him to do so. The reality of the resurrection and ascension is thus portrayed as palpable: whether or not Thomas touches, the narrator makes clear that the touch was possible. Jesus' response to Thomas' faith with the macarism, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe' (John 20:29), might be taken to denigrate the experience of the first disciples, who had perceived by sensory sight.¹⁹ However, that must be read in the context of John's emphasis on the verification of Jesus' ministry by the physical sensory observation (sights, smells, sounds and touch) of the disciples and others, which will ground the testimony of future believers (cf. 1 John 1:1–3).²⁰

This brief overview of sense perception and testimony shows that there is strong evidence to suggest that sense perception should be understood in the context of testimony. We have identified a number of ways in which John draws on material from the Old Testament to develop the relationship between them: the theophanies of Sinai and Jacob's ladder (cf. John 1:18, 51; 5:37); the Exodus miracles (cf. the Johannine signs); the emphasis on memory and communal vision to make vivid and intelligible what was seen (cf. John 1:14; 2:22; 12:16); the Tabernacle (cf. John 1:14; 2:22); prophetic signs and symbolic actions (cf. John 2:14–17; 12:3–8; 13:1–17) and the Isaianic motifs of light and darkness (cf. John 1:5; 8:13; 12:35–36 etc.) and of divine hardening (cf. John 12:40) in the context of the trial of God himself. These themes along with the discussion of their Old Testament background will bring into focus John's association of knowledge with sense perception in Chapter 4.

We have also seen that John consistently heightens the emphasis on the senses, as it were, recounting and eliciting testimony from different witnesses. The Graeco-Roman background to this rhetorical emphasis on sense perception to aid vividness in testimony is explored in our Chapter 5. In Part II of the thesis, we examine in greater depth how John, through the rhetoric of sense perception, creates a persuasive testimony about the revelation of God in Jesus. However, it must be acknowledged at this stage that both 'sense perception' and 'testimony' are complex terms. We go on now to outline the issues involved in these two areas.

¹⁹ W. S. North, "'Lord, If You Had Been Here ...' (John 11.21): The Absence of Jesus and Strategies of Consolation in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 36 (2013): 39–52, at 45.

²⁰ This will be discussed in Part II, especially in Chapter 8.

2. Problems with Sense Perception²¹

In John, we see emphasis on physical sense perception, but John's usage is not always straightforward and can create ambiguity and misunderstanding. His use of sense perception is ambiguous in several ways.

2.1. The Undefined Object

Sometimes when John uses verbs of sight, he does not specify the object. For example, when Jesus sees the two disciples following him (John 1:38) and invites them to 'come and see' (John 1:39), there is no direct object after this phrase. John leaves unspecified what exactly it is that Jesus wants them to 'come and see.'²² This use of sense perception invites us to contemplate a possible symbolic meaning.

Another example in this category is the combination of sense perception and testimony: we have seen and testified. The Baptist declares in John 1:34: 'I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.' This combination of sense perception and testimony is significant. But what the Baptist has seen is not stated explicitly in this verse, although, from John 1:32–33, we can infer that what he has seen is the Spirit descending out of heaven like a dove and abiding on Jesus. Yet this vision of the Spirit is also interpretative. Are we to understand sense perception and testimony in John 1:34 as physical or perhaps as a literary expression which does not refer to physical sense perception at all? We find a very similar expression on the lips of Jesus. He says to Nicodemus, 'we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen' (John 3:11). What does Jesus refer to when he says 'we have seen'? Similarly, in John 19:35, 'He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe.' Again this specifies no object of the verb of seeing.

²¹ Hirsch-Luipold identifies several literary signals that indicate the 'breakings of perception (Brechungen der Wahrnehmung).' Hirsch-Luipold, *Sinne*, 83–90.

²² Thus Aquinas interprets this phrase in a mystical sense and says, 'Come and see: Come, by believing and working; and see, by experiencing and understanding.' T. Aquinas, *Commentary on St. John: Part I: Chapters 1–7* (trans. J. A. Weisheipl; Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1993), 1.15.292.

2.2. The Vision of the Invisible: Glory, Spirit and Lamb of God

Even when John specifies the object after verbs of sight, the meaning can be ambiguous. When John and the believing community declare that they have seen the glory of Jesus in John 1:14, what kind of vision does John refer to – one seen physically or one seen in the spiritual sense? And what does John mean by ‘seeing the glory’? Later, in John 1:18, John depicts Jesus as the one who ‘exegeted God’ in a context where no one has ever seen God. How are we to understand John’s use of ‘seeing’ here? When the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him, he declares ‘Look! The Lamb of God.’ The vision of the Baptist is certainly physical, but the use of ‘Lamb of God’ makes this vision complicated. How can the Baptist ‘see’ that Jesus is the ‘Lamb of God’? Does it refer to spiritual insight? And what does the Baptist mean when he says: ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him’ (John 1:32). What does he see? These are significant questions related to John’s use of sense perception and testimony.

2.3. The Perception of God by Privileged Witnesses

The perception of God is a complicated question, yet it is also the focus of the Gospel. There are three privileged witnesses who have some kind of divine perception, which the readers are invited to learn to share, through their reading of the narrative. The Baptist states that his knowledge and perception of who Jesus is has a divine origin (John 1:33). Unlike the men sent by the Pharisees, he has immediate insightful perception of the Son of God (John 1:24). John and the Johannine community also claim that they have seen the glory of the divine Logos, ‘the glory as of a father’s only son’ (John 1:14) This is clearly a divine glory but John does not make clear at this stage how they see it. John says that no one has ever seen or heard from God (John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46) but Jesus alone (John 5:17–22; 8:38; 14:7). Do we understand Jesus’ perception of God to be or have been physical as on earth? Even if this perception is different from human perception, the implication that seeing Jesus in the world is seeing God is made explicit in John 14:7–11. Yet, obviously, physical perception of Jesus does not necessarily equate to perception of God.

2.4. The Perception of Signs within the Narrative

The relationship between the perception of signs and faith is not completely clear in the Gospel, because we find not only statements suggesting that signs are significant in producing faith, but also statements implying that faith based on sight is not true faith. John states that the wine miracle was the first sign that Jesus performed and that (consequently, it is implied) his disciples believed in him (John 2:11). The statement ‘Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him’ (John 12:37) seems to suggest that signs are expected to produce faith. In his purpose statement, he also writes, ‘Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name’ (John 20:30–31). There are, however, statements which seem to denigrate faith based on signs. Even though many believe in Jesus’ name after seeing his signs, Jesus does not entrust himself to them (John 2:23). The rebuke of Jesus, ‘Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe,’ is seen by some scholars as a denigration of signs (John 4:48). There are also different responses to the signs. Some follow Jesus because of the signs, but whether they have faith in him is unstated (John 6:2). Some see the signs but do not recognise what they have seen are ‘signs’ (John 6:30). Others see the signs and respond in faith by worshipping Jesus (John 9:38). Because of these ambiguous statements about signs, the perception of signs is an issue debated by scholars.²³

There is also theological significance in the signs. Unlike in the Synoptics, where metaphorical discourse is concentrated in the parables of Jesus, in John it characterises the narrative of his actions and discourses.²⁴ Thus, in John’s narrative, we see a blend of physicality and spirituality. For example, the metaphorical statement about eating and drinking Jesus’ body (John 6:51–55) follows after the physical eating of the bread and fish that Jesus provided. Moreover, Jesus’ statement in John 9:39 plays on the physical and metaphorical level of sense perception: ‘I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.’ We can see John’s emphasis on physical sense perception, i.e.

²³ See Chapter 1, section 2.1.1.

²⁴ Hirsch-Luipold, *Sinne*, 83.

the wine that can be tasted and the bread that can be eaten, but the various responses to the signs show that physical sense perception is never alone sufficient for spiritual insight.

2.5. Perception Pre- and Post-Easter

Some scholars argue that, in John, the first disciples are, oddly, disadvantaged by being with Jesus because they do not have the Paraclete. Jesus says to his disciples that it is for your advantage that the Paraclete comes (John 16:7). Jesus' statement in John 20:29 also seems to suggest that those who do not have physical perception of the earthly Jesus (and his signs) are blessed. There seems to be a difference in pre- and post-Easter perception. Is it fair to say, for John, the first disciples were in a disadvantaged position since they perceived the earthly Jesus, while future believers were in an advantageous position because they did not? This is significant in our study of sense perception, but is discussed fully in Part II (Chapter 8).

The above examples show that sense perception in relation to testifying to Jesus is complicated, because it usually involves many levels, although a physical level is always discernible. The complexities raised here are discussed more fully in Part II, which takes up particularly the issue of the role of privileged witnesses in the perception of God (Chapter 6), the perception of signs within the narrative (Chapter 7) and the significance of the passion, death and resurrection in bridging the gap between the pre- and post-Easter communities of witnesses (Chapter 8).

3. John's Use of Testimony Language

This chapter has already explored the role of testimony in the Fourth Gospel, focusing on how it is used in relation to sense perception, whether or not along with the particular vocabulary of testimony. Since the theme of 'testimony' and the trial motif have been quite widely discussed in Johannine scholarship, it may be helpful at this stage to clarify what is meant by 'testimony' in this dissertation.

Testimony in Johannine scholarship can be understood in reference to ‘historical eyewitnesses’ who bear witness to the ‘historical figure of Jesus.’²⁵ In this regard, the senses of sight and hearing are related to testimony, for they provide ‘personal experience and individual certainty.’²⁶ It can also be understood in reference to witnesses in the juridical context. In this case, all these characters, such as the Baptist, the first disciples, the Samaritans, God and the Holy Spirit and even Jesus himself are called up in court as witnesses for Jesus. The signs of Jesus also have ‘evidential value’ towards proving Jesus’ identity in the lawsuit context.²⁷ This aspect of testimony has been much discussed among scholars and I believe it to be significant.²⁸ But the theme of testimony cannot be confined to this. It is also to be understood in relation to the broader category of the revelation of God in Jesus, and thus to knowledge of God.²⁹

John makes it clear that, for the disciples within the narrative, it is through perceiving the Logos made flesh that they can have faith in God. Jesus is where the revelation of God happens. Since the language of testimony is closely connected with knowledge of God, the crucial question in John is, how does Jesus make God known to us? It is in this context that we find the use of sense perception and testimony most prominent. How can someone claim that he knows God? Is it through seeing miracles or hearing God’s words? In John, it is through seeing the signs of Jesus, hearing the words of Jesus and ‘seeing’ Jesus that one can know God. Thus the signs and works of Jesus testify to Jesus as the one sent by God (John 5:36). The words that Jesus speaks are not from himself, but from the Father (John 14:24). Jesus has made known to the disciples everything he has heard from the Father (John 15:15). That the knowledge of God is revealed through Jesus is made explicit in Jesus’ words to Philip in the Farewell Discourses: ‘If you know me, you will know my Father also. From

²⁵ D. M. Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 77. Cf. R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006).

²⁶ W. Michaelis, "ὁράω," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*: 341.

²⁷ Trites, *Witness*, 87. Cf. G. F. Woods, "The Evidential Value of the Biblical Miracles," Pages 21–32 in *Miracles: Cambridge Studies in Their Philosophy and History* (ed. C. F. D. Moule; London: A. R. Mowbray, 1965).

²⁸ Cf. J. C. Hindley, "Witness in the Fourth Gospel," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 18 (1965): 319–337, at 320; J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), xc-xcii; Harvey, *Trial*, 18–45; Charles, "Witness," 71–83.

²⁹ Boice argues that the term ‘testimony’ is used by John as a technical term for ‘revelation.’ Boice, *Witness*, 15.

now on you do know him and have seen him' (John 14:7; cf. 8:19); 'whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14:9). Notwithstanding the fact that the language of sense perception and that of testimony are not always used together, thematically and conceptually for John, sense perception is important in giving testimony about God. Rhetorically, John heightens this dimension of his narrative by involving his readers through an appeal to the senses.

To conclude, there is a *prima facie* case for regarding sense perception as important in giving testimony, even testimony about God. This sense perception in relation to the divine is complicated, because it operates at more than one level, but a physical and emotive dimension is always significant. So, John's use of testimony not only has a juridical sense and function but should also be understood in a wider context related to knowledge of God and the revelation of God in Jesus. This is where sense perception becomes significant for it helps to draw the readers into the narrative, so that they can see and hear with the author and the characters and ultimately bear testimony to Jesus.

Chapter 3: The Intended Audience and the Purpose of the Gospel

It is shown in Chapter 2 that, although, there are different ways of understanding John's use of testimony and the role sense perception plays in it, they are to be understood as connected. It is also argued there that John uses testimony not only in the juridical context, but also in the wider context of knowledge of God. In this regard, John's use of testimony appears to be intended primarily to make his readers not into judges or jurors but into witnesses. John's testimony is of a kind that would engage the emotions of the believing community to help make the events vividly present before them. It is argued in this chapter that John writes primarily for believers in order to strengthen their faith, so that they can bear witness for Jesus to non-believers.

Scholars' opinions diverge regarding the audience and the purpose of John's Gospel. This is largely due to the materials selected for discussion and to the possible background of the Gospel (Jewish, Hellenistic or Gnostic). The Jewish elements in the Gospel lead some scholars to think that John is addressing Greek-speaking Diaspora-Judaism with an evangelistic purpose.¹ On the other hand, scholars who think that John is highly influenced by Hellenistic culture argue that John wrote with a missionary purpose and that he was addressing the Greek world.² Based on texts that emphasise Jesus' divinity (John 1:1–18) or Jesus' disputes with the Jews (John 5–8), some argue that the purpose could have been apologetic. Discussions in this area are focused mainly on a postulated polemical purpose of John's Gospel, whether against the Baptist sect³ or a particular heresy⁴ or the Jews.⁵ The majority view of

¹ Cf. J. A. T. Robinson, "The Destination and Purpose of St John's Gospel," Pages 191–209 in *New Testament Issues* (London: SCM, 1970), 199–200; Carson, *John*, 91; J. Bowker, "Origin and Purpose of St John's Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 11 (1965): 398–408, at 408; H. B. Kossen, "Who Were the Greeks of John xii 20," Pages 97–110 in *Studies in John* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 106.

² C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 7–9.

³ E. Burton analyses the prologue and argues that, in the prologue, 1:1–18, one can find an indication of John's purpose, which is 'to controvert the doctrine of the Messiahship of John the Baptist.' E. D. W. Burton, "The Purpose and Plan of the Gospel of John. I," *The Biblical World* 13 (1899): 16–41. Bultmann also accepts this view. R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 17–18. However, it is unlikely that John writes his whole Gospel against the Baptist since the narrative about the Baptist occupies only a minor part of it. Besides, this is the Gospel of Jesus, not of the Baptist. Brown and Beasley-Murray both reject the view that John wrote against the Baptist. Brown, *John*, 1:LXVII–LXX; Beasley-Murray, *John*,

scholars is that John wrote to strengthen the faith of Christians; his audience could have been Christians in general or the Johannine community.⁶ There are three elements that help us to identify John's intended audience and purpose: John's own purpose statement in John 20:30–31; John's concept of faith, and the overall context of the Gospel.

1. John 20:30–31

It is widely agreed that we must take John's own statement in John 20:30–31 seriously when discussing his purpose.⁷ Scholars, nevertheless, reach different conclusions based on the same passage. Some argue that, because of John's statement in John 20:30–31, faith in Jesus is based on signs:⁸

lxxxix. Also, John esteems the Baptist as the most important human witness to Jesus. How can he write against his own witness?

⁴ Even though Irenaeus believed that John wrote against the heresy of Cerinthus, the view that John wrote against Gnostics remains questionable. See Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:169–172. Schnelle, on the other hand, argues that John's Christology is anti-docetic. Cf. U. Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John: An Investigation of the Place of the Fourth Gospel in the Johannine School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

⁵ Whether John wrote against 'the Jews' can itself become a thesis. I do not go into detailed discussion here. Many scholars have written articles on this topic, see R. Bieringer et al., eds., *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001). Also, C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1975).

⁶ Brown, *John*, 1:LXXVIII; H. N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 651–653; Kossen, "Greeks," 97–110; P. F. Ellis, *The Genius of John: A Composition-Critical Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1984), 5; E. L. Allen, "Jewish Christian Church in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74 (1955): 88–92, at 92; A. T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to St John* (London: Continuum, 2005), 82–89. Bauckham, based largely on John 11:2, argues that John's intended readers had read Mark, and that John was therefore writing for those already familiar with Mark's Gospel, and thus for a wider community rather than the Johannine community. R. Bauckham, "The Audience of the Gospel of John," Pages 113–124 in *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), 113–124. But Wendy North has argued persuasively that Bauckham's assumption is based on flawed interpretation of John 11:2. W. S. North, "John for Readers of Mark? A Response to Richard Bauckham's Proposal," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25 (2003): 449–468.

⁷ D. A. Carson, "The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:31 Reconsidered," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987): 639–651; S. S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 174–186; W. C. Van Unnik, "The Purpose of John's Gospel," Pages 381–411 in *Studia Evangelica 1. Papers Presented to the International Congress on "the Fourth Gospels" in 1957 Held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1957* (ed. K. Aland; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1959); A. Reinhartz, "John 20:30–31 and the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1983); Lincoln, *John*, 87.

⁸ Reinhartz, "Purpose," iii.

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe (ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε) that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,⁹ and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Most discussions of John's purpose, however, focus on the text and syntax of John 20:31. Two issues fall to be discussed here: the textual variant in John 20:31a and the interpretation of the construction of ἵνα+πιστεύω.

1.1. Textual Variant in John 20:31a

The major debate about John 20:31 concerns the textual variant of the verb πιστεύω. Most scholars, based on the witness of some manuscripts, believe that the verb tense that John uses in John 20:31 is the present subjunctive and interpret it as 'in order that you [continue to] believe.' Thus John writes to strengthen the faith of Christians.¹⁰ But the aorist subjunctive is also attested in many manuscripts. If the original text is aorist subjunctive, then it can be interpreted as 'so that you may come to believe.' John is then addressing non-believers for an evangelical purpose.¹¹

Before we examine the textual variant in John 20:31a in detail, it may be helpful to compare John 19:35 and John 20:31, since both address future readers and use the same construction. There is also a textual variant in John 19:35:

He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe (ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύ[σ]ητε).

⁹ Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ: There is a debate on whether Jesus (Ἰησοῦς) or the Messiah (ὁ χριστός) is the subject. This debate was first raised by Carson, "Purpose": 639–651. For Carson's response to Fee's objections, see D. A. Carson, "Syntactical and Text-Critical Observations on John 20:30–31: One More Round on the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124 (2005): 693–714.

¹⁰ Thus Fee believes that P⁶⁶ supports the present subjunctive. He argues that present subjunctive is the *lectio difficilior*. G. D. Fee, "On the Text and Meaning of Jn 20,30-31," Pages 2193–2205 in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (ed. F. V. Segbroek; Louvain: Peeters, 1992). For others in defense of the present subjunctive, see B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 219–220; Brown, *John*, 2:1056; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: SPCK, 1978), 575.

¹¹ Metzger, *Greek*, 219.

πιστεύητε: ⲥ* B Ψ; Or

πιστεύσητε: ⲥ¹ A D^s K L N W Γ Δ Θ

But these are written so that you may come to believe (ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε) that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31).

πιστεύητε: P^{66vid} ⲥ* B Θ

πιστεύσητε: ⲥ² A C D K L N W Γ Δ Ψ

This comparison shows that the present subjunctive of both verses is preserved in ⲥ* B and the aorist subjunctive of both verses is attested in corrected ⲥ and A C D K L N W Γ Δ. Intriguingly, in Codex Athous Lavrensis (Ψ, eighth/ninth century), the scribe keeps present subjunctive in John 19:35, but aorist subjunctive in John 20:31, but it is the other way around in Codex Coridethianus (Θ, ninth century). Since the witnesses in John 19:35 and John 20:31a are very similar, we examine only the major witnesses in John 20:31.

The present subjunctive πιστεύητε is attested in P^{66vid} ⲥ* B Θ. Although the first witness to πιστεύητε is listed as P⁶⁶, which is considered the earliest and most reliable manuscript for the Gospel of John,¹² the word is partly lacunose. Fee argues that the space between τ and η is ‘capable of sustaining only two letters in this scribe’s ordinary hand,’ but the fact that it is partly lacunose makes it uncertain that the word attested there is πιστεύητε.¹³ However, πιστεύητε is also attested in the original manuscripts of Codex Sinaiticus (ⲥ) and Codex Vaticanus (B), which are both dated as the fourth century and are considered as primary textual witnesses for the Gospels.¹⁴ Both are rated as Category I sources by Aland and Aland.¹⁵ Although

¹² K. Elliott and I. A. Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament: An Introduction for English Readers* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 15; P. W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary: Commentary on the Variant Readings of the Ancient New Testament Manuscripts and How They Relate to the Major English Translations* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), xvi.

¹³ Fee, "Jn 20,30-31," 2197. Klink is right to question Fee’s heavy dependence on P⁶⁶, but he fails to evaluate other textual evidence that supports the reading of the present subjunctive. E. W. Klink, *The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 215.

¹⁴ Comfort, *Text*, xvi.

Codex Coridethianus (Θ) is dated around the 9th century, Aland and Aland classified it as Category II. The non-Egyptian witness of Θ together with the Egyptian witness of P⁶⁶ Ⲙ* B combine as reliable evidence in favour of πιστεύητε since they give us evidence from two quite different traditions.¹⁶ This result can also be applied to John 19:35. Although in John 19:35, we do not have the witness of P⁶⁶ and B, we do have the witness of Origen.

The aorist subjunctive πιστεύσητε is attested in more manuscripts, such as Ⲙ² A C D K. However, they represent a geographically narrow range (mostly from Egypt, plus D from Lyon and K from Cyprus) and are dated around the same time (fifth century), except for Ⲙ² (fourth century) and K (ninth century). According to Aland's and Aland's categorisation, the most reliable manuscript among them is the corrected version of Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ²), which is often corrected to conform to the Byzantine text.¹⁷ This reduces its reliability since we may be looking at a hand which intentionally imitates what is often regarded as a later form of text. The aorist subjunctive is attested in Codex Alexandrinus (A). Because of the different types of texts used, the reliability of this witness varies depending on the text. The Gospel text preserved in A is of the Byzantine text type and thus is seen as less reliable.¹⁸ It is classified as Category III in the Aland-Aland system.¹⁹ Codex Ephraemi (C) and Codex Bezae (D) are usually not considered to be reliable witnesses. The former, notwithstanding the fact that it is dated as fifth century, agrees generally with secondary Alexandrian witnesses and the Byzantine text. The latter is famous for its 'free addition' and 'occasional omission',²⁰ and thus, when it contradicts the early tradition, should be examined more carefully.²¹ Codex Cyprius (K), although it has a complete copy of the four Gospels, is a typical Byzantine type of text, dated in the ninth century, and classified by Aland-Aland as Category V.²² Moreover, if we survey the textual variants in ἵνα-clauses in John, we see a tendency for the scripts of D K L

¹⁵ K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticisms* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 107.

¹⁶ Fee, "Jn 20,30-31," 2197.

¹⁷ Comfort, *Text*, xxxi.

¹⁸ B. M. Metzger and B. D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 67.

¹⁹ Aland and Aland, *Text*, 107.

²⁰ Metzger and Ehrman, *Text*, 69–73.

²¹ Aland and Aland, *Text*, 108.

²² *Ibid.*, 111.

N W Γ Δ Ψ to correct present subjunctive to aorist subjunctive. This is evident in John 6:29 and 17:21. Here, even though there is textual variation, the present subjunctive is the better attested text.

From the textual evidence, the aorist subjunctive is attested in later and in less reliable witnesses and most of them belong to the Byzantine text. On the other hand, the present subjunctive is attested in earlier and arguably more reliable manuscripts. Moreover, it is attested both in Egyptian and non-Egyptian texts, and thus is more likely to be the original text. Besides, it is quite possible that scribes would have changed a present subjunctive to an aorist subjunctive in both John 19:35 and 20:31 since John usually uses the aorist subjunctive with ἵνα-clauses. However, it is important to point out that the tenses do not help us to conclusively determine the meaning of πιστεύω because John uses both present subjunctive and aorist subjunctive to refer to someone who ‘continues to believe.’ We can see this by looking at the construction of ἵνα+πιστεύω.

1.2. The Construction of ἵνα+πιστεύω

To understand how to interpret ἵνα-πιστεύω in John 20:31, we now turn to examine all the ἵνα-clauses with πιστεύω used in John. The construction ἵνα-πιστεύω is used eleven times, both in aorist subjunctive and present subjunctive (John 1:7; 6:29, 30; 9:36; 11:15, 42; 13:19; 14:29; 17:21; 19:35; 20:31). The chart below gives an overview of the use of the tenses and the intended audience in the narrative which will be argued for in next section.

	Tense according to NA28	Audience	Textual Variant
John 1:7	Aorist	Unbelievers	No
John 6:29	Present	Unbelievers	πιστεύητε: P ⁷⁵ ⋈ A B L Θ Ψ ²³ πιστεύσητε: D K W Γ Δ
John 6:30	Aorist	Unbelievers	No
John 11:15	Aorist	Believers	No
John 11:42	Aorist	Unbelievers	No
John 13:19	Aorist	Believers	πιστεύητε: B (C) πιστεύσητε: P ⁶⁶ ⋈ L
John 14:29	Aorist	Believers	No
John 17:21	Present	Unbelievers	πιστεύη: P ⁶⁶ ⋈ B C W; Cl πιστεύση: P ⁶⁰ ⋈ ² A C ³ D K L N Γ Δ Ψ
John 19:35	Uncertain	Uncertain	πιστεύητε: ⋈ [*] B Ψ; Or πιστεύσητε: ⋈ ¹ A D ^s K L N W Γ Δ Θ
John 20:31	Uncertain	Uncertain	πιστεύητε: P ^{66vid} ⋈ [*] B Θ πιστεύσητε: ⋈ ² A C D K L N W Γ Δ Ψ

Fee is one of the few scholars who tackle the purpose statement in great detail by looking at the textual evidence and examining the ἵνα-clauses in John. He notes the importance of the Johannine use of the ἵνα-clauses with πιστεύω and focuses on whether John uses the present subjunctive in a meaningful way.²⁴ He argues that John uses the aorist tense as his default tense and thus that it has ‘no further significance at all.’ As for the present subjunctive, he argues that the occurrences of the verb πιστεύω in John 6:29; 13:19; 17:21; 19:35 and 20:31 are all present subjunctive and that it is ‘meaningful’ for it ‘presupposes a document intended for those who are already members of the believing community.’²⁵ The problem with Fee’s thesis, as Carson already points out, is that, even if he can prove that the present subjunctive is meaningful, he cannot prove that John uses the present subjunctive to address only believers.²⁶ Another problem with Fee’s analysis is that he puts too much emphasis on verb tense. Focus on the verb tense to determine meaning has, however, been shown to be fruitless by developments in verbal aspect theory, by which it has been shown

²³ Cited from B. D. Ehrman et al., *The Text of the Fourth Gospel in the Writings of Origen* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 168.

²⁴ Fee, "Jn 20,30-31," 2199–2205.

²⁵ Ibid., 2205.

²⁶ Carson, "John 20:30–31": 703–714.

persuasively that Greek verbs do not reflect time.²⁷ Thus one cannot argue solely on the basis of the present subjunctive that John's statement is addressed to believers. Rather it is the context that tells us.

Since John uses the aorist subjunctive to address both believers and non-believers, what remains at issue is whether this is also true of the present subjunctive. Thus we have to examine the problematic verses that have textual variants to see if the present subjunctive is the original text in all of them, as Fee argues. Then we look at the context to determine the identity of those whom John is addressing. There are five verses that have textual variants:

This is the work of God, that you believe in him (ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε) whom he has sent (John 6:29).

I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe (ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε) that I am he (John 13:19).

As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world (ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύ[σ]ῃ) may believe that you have sent me (John 17:21).

He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe (ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύ[σ]ητε) (John 19:35).

But these are written so that you may come to believe (ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε) that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31).

The textual evidence in John 6:29 is less problematic since the present subjunctive is attested by most major witnesses and πιστεύσῃτε is attested only in later textual tradition D K W Γ Δ. But John 13:19 is not straightforward. We have to

²⁷ For further reading on verbal aspect theory, see S. E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989); K. L. McKay, *A New Syntax of the Verb in New Testament Greek: An Aspectual Approach* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994); B. M. Fanning, *A Study of Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

compare it with John 14:29 where there is no textual variant. The second half of both verses reads:

ἵνα πιστεύσητε ὅταν γένηται ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι (John 13:19).

ἵνα ὅταν γένηται πιστεύσητε (John 14:29).

The aorist subjunctive in John 13:19 is attested in P⁶⁶ & L, where it conforms to John 14:29. The present tense is attested in B and C, despite the fact that the aorist subjunctive was used in John 14:29. Usually B agrees with & (John 17:21; 19:35; 20:31), but not in this case. Furthermore, the scribe of C has a tendency to preserve the aorist subjunctive, as in the case of John 17:21 and 20:31, but does not do so here. Even though the scribe of B has a tendency to keep the present subjunctive in verses that have textual variants, the fact that he does not change the aorist subjunctive in John 13:19 to conform with John 14:29 and all other verses using an aorist subjunctive (John 1:7; 6:30; 11:15, 42) suggests that the present subjunctive may well be the original reading. This is *lectio difficilior*.²⁸ It is also supported by Origen's reading in his *Commentary on John*, Book 32.15. 169, 170, 176.²⁹

The witnesses to the present subjunctive in John 17:21 are similar to those for John 19:35 and John 20:31. Thus the present subjunctive is more probably the original tense, as discussed above. We can conclude, then, in agreement with Fee, that it is more likely that the present subjunctive is the original text in all of the five verses. What we need to determine is who is the object.

The 'you' in John 6:29 is clearly addressing non-believers since Jesus is speaking to his opponents, while John 13:19 is addressed to the disciples. But there is a debate about who ὁ κόσμος in John 17:21 refers to. Fee argues that it refers to believers, but this is unlikely, as Carson has persuasively argued. This term ὁ κόσμος can be neutral or negative in John, but never good.³⁰ The context suggests that it

²⁸ For other reasons supporting the present subjunctive as the original text, see Fee, "Jn 20:30-31," 2202.

²⁹ See also Ehrman, et al., *Origen*, 281.

³⁰ Carson, "John 20:30-31": 705.

refers to unbelievers. Thus the first three instances where the present subjunctive is used have in view both believers and unbelievers.

We are then left with John 19:35 and John 20:31. The difficulty remains that both verses address the readers (you), but there is no hint from the verses themselves to help us determine whether ‘you’ refers to believers or non-believers and the tenses do not help on that either since John’s use of the present and aorist subjunctive can be used for both believers and non-believers.³¹

The analysis of the ἵνα-πιστεύω clauses shows that it is simply not possible to rely on the tenses in the construction ἵνα-πιστεύω to decide who the audience is. However, what we can be certain of is that this construction ἵνα-πιστεύω, whether it is present subjunctive or aorist subjunctive, can be used with the meaning of sustaining the faith of believers. This understanding of ἵνα-πιστεύω fits John’s overall concept of faith. It is not the tense of the verb which determines the readership or audience and the purpose of the Gospel.³² Rather, it is the context that helps us to decide the meaning of the verse.

2. John’s Concept of Faith

In John, faith is not static, but dynamic.³³ The first two disciples believe in Jesus by hearing the Baptist’s testimony and this then produces a chain reaction, so that other disciples are drawn to Jesus. By the end of the first chapter, the disciples already have an initial faith. But John states that, after the wine miracle, ‘his disciples believed in him’ (John 2:11). Their faith is strengthened and confirmed by the wine miracle. Similarly, in the story of the Samaritans, many Samaritans believe in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony (John 4:39).³⁴ However, their faith is again

³¹ Cf. Ibid.

³² Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:338; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 387.

³³ C. R. Koester, "Jesus' Resurrection, the Signs, and the Dynamics of Faith in the Gospel of John," Pages 47–74 in *Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (eds. C. R. Koester and R. Bieringer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). O'Brien also argues that belief is a process in John, see K. S. O'Brien, "Written That You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67 (2005): 284–302, at 290–291.

³⁴ Many scholars believe that the Samaritans have initial belief because of the testimony of the Samaritan woman. Moloney, *John*, 146; Carson, *John*, 231; Barrett, *John*, 243.

strengthened and confirmed when they hear Jesus' words themselves. On hearing the words of Jesus themselves, they judge the testimony of the woman to be true.

Jesus' disciples have already seen his signs and heard from him. Based on these, they are said to believe in Jesus on several occasions (John 2:11; 6:69; 11:27),³⁵ yet their faith is only partial. They believe in Jesus' identity as the Son of God and the Holy One of God (John 1:49; 6:69). They do not, however, fully grasp what that means. They believe that God sent Jesus and that he is the promised Messiah but they do not truly understand the relationship between Jesus and the Father. This is shown in John 14:7–9, where sense perception plays a central role. Jesus says, in John 14:7, 'If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him (γινώσκετε αὐτὸν καὶ ἑώρακάτε αὐτόν).' Philip in turn replies, 'show us the Father, and we will be satisfied' (John 14:8). His reply shows that he does not understand that Jesus is talking about his unity with the Father, which is expressed using the language of knowledge and sense perception. His understanding of ἑώρακάτε is strictly literal; it means seeing the Father with his own eyes, face to face. What he is asking for is a theophany: a direct vision of God.³⁶

Jesus then encourages his disciples to 'Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves' (John 14:11). In John 16:30, the disciples confirm to Jesus that 'Now we know that you know all things, and do not need to have anyone question you; by this we believe that you came from God.' Yet, Jesus questions them: 'Do you now believe?' (John 16:31). We see that the disciples are always in the process of coming to believe. But there is one more thing that they need to believe in: the resurrection of Jesus (John 20–21). This then leads to the last occurrence of πιστεύω in John 20:31. From these observations, we can conclude that faith in John is a continuous process and that this is how we should understand πιστεύω in John 20:31. We strengthen this argument by examining the content of the Gospel.

³⁵ Although the confession is made by Martha, it is very likely that we are to understand that the disciples also believe that.

³⁶ This is similar to what Moses asked for. Cf. Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:68.

3. The Content of the Gospel

3.1. Structure and Presentation

By looking at John's presentation of his material, we see that John expects his readers to be familiar with some of what underlies his Gospel. For example, the Prologue is not written to explain to unbelievers who Jesus is. Rather it is to affirm the divinity of Jesus. Jesus is the Logos, who was with God from the beginning and is himself God (John 1:1–2). The world is made through him, which suggests that he has power for creation (John 1:4). He is also the source of life and is true light (John 1:5–6). Jesus is the word that has 'become flesh and lived among us' (John 1:14) and he 'is close to the Father's bosom, and has made him known' (John 1:18). All of these passages affirm the divinity of Jesus.

Neither is the public ministry of Jesus shaped primarily to make a case for Jesus to unbelievers. The passages on Jesus' discourses and his disputes with 'the Jews' presuppose that the readers of the Gospel have some knowledge of the debates about Jesus' identity during Jesus' public ministry.³⁷ One detail that suggests that the readers do possess some degree of knowledge is John 11:2, where John writes, 'Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill.' The anointing story does not happen until John 12, but John assumes his readers' familiarity with the story and that they can connect Mary with it, so he reminds them who Mary is.³⁸ Thus when John writes his Gospel, he is thinking of those who have heard of the anointing story of Mary.

3.2. The language of Abiding and Indwelling

The language of 'abiding' and 'indwelling' underscores the importance of personal emotional experience rather than just cold intellectual judgment on truth or falsehood. This suggests that John is addressing an already Christian community. The language of 'abiding' first occurs in John 1:32, 38–39. Its next appearance is in John 6:56, where 'abiding' is expressed in a sense-perceptible way: 'Those who eat my

³⁷ Lincoln, *John*, 87.

³⁸ See detailed discussion in North, "John": 449–468.

flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.’ The word ‘abide’ then occurs again in the Farewell Discourse. The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him, abides with the disciples (John 14:17). Jesus encourages his disciples to abide in him as he abides in them (John 15:4–7). By keeping the commandments of Jesus, the believers will abide in Jesus’ love. John’s emphasis on abiding and indwelling suggests that his target audiences are the believers.

3.3. Ambiguities and Allusiveness in Language

It is observed that the Gospel of John is full of paradoxes, ironies, and enigmatic declaration.³⁹ Ambiguity is one of the main features of the Gospel. Words give rise to multiple meanings without the possibility of clear demarcation, delimitation or translation. This ambiguity may be deliberate to evoke the contemplation and meditation of the readers on the subject of faith. A couple of examples illustrate our point. The first is the well-known ambiguous statement of ‘born from above’ in John 3. Nicodemus comes to see Jesus at night and Jesus says to him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above (γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν)’ (John 3:3).⁴⁰ The term ἄνωθεν can mean either ‘from above’ or ‘again.’ Nicodemus obviously understands it as ‘born again’ and thus asks: ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ (John 3:4). Jesus does not answer his question directly or clarify what he means by using ἄνωθεν. Instead, he gives a more complex idea: ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.’⁴¹ This passage would be difficult for non-believers to understand.

³⁹ R. Kysar, "Coming Hermeneutical Earthquake in Johannine Interpretation," Pages 185–198 in *'What Is John?' Vol. I, Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. F. F. Segovia; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 187.

⁴⁰ Nicodemus himself is a figure of ambiguity in John, see C. M. Conway, "Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel," *Biblical Interpretation* 10 (2002): 324–341.

⁴¹ For the meaning of ‘born of water and spirit,’ see L. L. Belleville, "'Born of Water and Spirit': John 3:5," *Trinity Journal* 1 (1980): 125–141; R. V. McCabe, "The Meaning of 'Born of Water and the Spirit' in John 3:5," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 4 (1999): 85–107; D. W. B. Robinson, "Born of Water and Spirit: Does John 3:5 Refer to Baptism?," *Reformed Theological Review* 25 (1966): 15–23.

Another ambiguous passage is John 6:51: 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.' The difficulty and misunderstanding that this verse causes is shown in John 6:52. The Jews ask: 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' Instead of clarifying, Jesus emphasises that his flesh is edible and his blood is drinkable: 'for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them' (John 6:55–56). In this discourse, we again see the language of 'abiding' which is clearly addressed to believers, and there is probably an allusion to the sacrament of the Eucharist, which would be obvious only to believers. The message here would be very difficult for non-believers to appreciate.

These examples support the argument that the gospel is written for contemplative, meditative reading in faith and thus addresses believers.

3.4. The Paraclete

Jesus' consolation does not stop with the prediction of persecution. To help the disciples remain faithful, Jesus gives them the promise of the coming of the Paraclete (John 16:7–10). It is unique in John that the name Paraclete is given to the Holy Spirit, which is a mark of its special importance to him.⁴² The Paraclete will come only when Jesus is absent and this is said to be for the advantage of the disciples (John 16:7), who do not have the Paraclete to help them understand the earthly ministry of Jesus while Jesus is present with them. Thus, in John's Gospel, the disciples often fail to understand Jesus' meaning (John 4:31–34; 11:11–4), and can only grasp the significance of the events after Jesus' death and resurrection by coming to a fresh understanding of what they remember (John 2:22; 7:39; 12:16).⁴³ Jesus' reply to Thomas in John 20:29 extends a blessing especially to the future disciples who are John's readers. While some scholars argue on the basis of these points that John regards later generations of believers as *more* blessed and *more* privileged than the first disciples,⁴⁴ this thesis argues rather that the experience of the first disciples is

⁴² Ridderbos, *John*, 500.

⁴³ North, "Absence": 44–45.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

made central to the experience and the vividness of the faith of later believers. At this point in our argument, however, all that need be noted is that John not only emphasises the gift of the Paraclete as provision in Jesus' absence, but also draws attention to how it can particularly serve later believers, who have *not* seen, and yet believe. This supports the argument that John envisages an audience composed primarily of believers.

3.5. The Mission Motif

Notwithstanding the fact that John writes mainly for believers, we should not overlook the passages which suggest that John also has an evangelistic purpose in mind. In the Prologue, John points out the purpose of the Baptist's testimony: 'He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him' (John 1:7). Also Jesus' mission is to reach out to non-believers. He says: 'I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd' (John 10:16). In Jesus' last prayer, he prays not only for his disciples, but also for those will come to faith through the words of the disciples (John 17:20; cf. 11:42).

4. Conclusion

The analysis of John's purpose statement in John 20:31 does not tell us the identity of John's intended audience. However, John's use of 'faith' does show that faith is a continuous process. It is through the study of the rest of the Gospel that we can determine John's audience. John's Gospel shows that he assumes his readers to have some knowledge of the material about which he writes. His use of 'abiding' language, his ambiguities and the farewell speeches of Jesus all suggest that John was thinking of the believing community when he wrote. This makes the use of sense perception and testimony significant, for they contribute to John's purpose. Through John's vivid narrative and the rhetorical use of testimony, the readers are invited to retake with John the journey to faith in Jesus and to do so through a narrative which involves them emotionally. The rhetoric of physical sense perception helps the readers to appreciate the testimony. However, we should not overlook passages that indicate John's evangelistic purpose. John may not be writing for unbelievers, but he

does have an evangelistic outlook and evangelism is achieved through the spreading of the message by believers. John's extensive use of sense perception and testimony aims not only to draw his readers into the narrative but also to encourage those readers to bear witness for Jesus.

The next two chapters will look at the Jewish Scriptures on which John draws and the Greco-Roman context within which John wrote his Gospel. We will examine there how the physical senses are used and appealed to in order to substantiate testimony in the wider theological and rhetorical culture in which John operated, and the final chapters of the thesis will show how this technique is used by John.

Chapter 4: Sense Perception, the Knowledge of God and Testimony in the Jewish Scriptures

In the Old Testament scriptures that John uses, sense perception is important to divine revelation and the emotional impact of the divine presence. In the Hebrew Scriptures and LXX, this kind of sense-perceptible revelation can be written about using the vocabulary of ‘testimony’ (עֵד, עֵד, LXX μαρτυρέω, μαρτύριον),¹ or in relation to the broader category of the knowledge of God (יָדָע, יָדָע; LXX γινώσκω, γινῶσις). The Old Testament use of sense-perceptible revelation and its relation to testimony serves as a basis for John’s presentation of sense-perceptible revelation in the person and work of Jesus. Although the focus of this dissertation is on John’s use of sense perception and testimony, the language of sense perception and the juridical metaphor are always related to a major theme of the Gospel: how does Jesus reveal knowledge of God? John said at the beginning of his Gospel that it is Jesus who is at the bosom of the Father who can make God known (ἐξηγέομαι; literally interpreting). Jesus himself emphasises that to know him is to know the Father (John 8:19; 14:7). He alone knows the Father (John 7:29; 8:55; 10:15). Since knowledge of God is such an important concept in John, it is necessary to explore the broader category of knowledge of God in relation to sense perception and testimony in our discussion of Jewish Scriptures.

John’s emphasis on perceiving (or failing to perceive) God through the senses often interacts with passages and motifs from the Scriptures. In this chapter, we will explore some of the multiple forms of this phenomenon. The account of Jacob’s ladder (Section 2.1) in Genesis probably shaped the promise that ‘you will see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man’ (John 1:51).² The theophany at Mount Sinai (Section 2.2) is the most likely background to the

¹ Although עֵד is also used as testimony (e.g. Gen. 21:30; Deut. 4:45; 6:17, 20; Josh. 24:27), this word is not used in Exodus and Isaiah.

² Most Johannine scholars regard the story of Jacob’s ladder as the background of John 1:51, see further in C. R. Koester, “Messianic Exegesis and the Call of Nathanael (John 1.45–51),” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 12 (1990): 23–34.

affirmation that no one except the Son has ever seen God (John 1:18, 5:37).³ The Exodus miracles (Section 3) informed John's presentation of the miraculous acts of Jesus seen as signs, and so, plausibly, did the signs-acts of the Old Testament prophets (Section 6).⁴ Deuteronomy's rhetoric of eyewitness language (Section 4) is used to undergird the Israelites' obedience to the testimonies, statutes and ordinances of God. In a similar way, John appeals to communal vision at key points in his Gospel, including, as examples, 'we have seen his glory' (John 1:14) and 'We know that his testimony is true' (John 21:24).

In the Pentateuch, the tabernacle and ark, sometimes called the 'tabernacle of testimony (משכן העדות)' and 'the ark of testimony (אֲרֹן הָעֵדוּת)' locate the divine presence in a visible, palpable way (Section 5). The Tabernacle becomes the place where God's presence is most immediately known. Eventually housed lavishly in the Temple at Jerusalem, this unique holy place forms the centre of Jewish spiritual geography. John reconfigures this tradition when he associates 'the Word became flesh and tabernacled (ἐσκήνωσεν)⁵ among us' with how we 'saw his glory' (John 1:14) and relocates the Temple in Jesus' risen body (John 2:19, 21).⁶ John also draws extensively on Isaianic themes, including those that concern the senses.⁷ In Isaiah, judgment on those who

³ It is widely acknowledged that John 1:14–18 and Exodus 33–34 are parallels. J. H. Neyrey, "'First', 'Only', 'One of a Few', and 'No One Else': The Rhetoric of Uniqueness and the Doxologies in 1 Timothy," *Biblica* 86 (2005): 59–87, at 72–73, 83.

⁴ Some scholars argue that the origin of Johannine signs is from the Old Testament, in particular, the book of Exodus. P. Riga, "Signs of Glory," *Interpretation* 17 (1963): 402–424; S. V. McCasland, "Signs and Wonders," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76 (1957): 149–152. Although Clark is comparing the book of Wisdom with John, he argues that the signs still refer back to Exodus Miracles. Cf. D. K. Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983): 201–209.

⁵ The interpretation of σκηνώω is disputed, see further in J. C. Meagher, "John 1:14 and the New Temple," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 57–68; D. J. MacLeod, "The Incarnation of the Word: John 1:14," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 161 (2004): 72–88; E. F. Harrison, "A Study of John 1:14," Pages 23–36 in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1978).

⁶ M. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001); P. M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Waynesboro, Ga.: Paternoster, 2006); A. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002).

⁷ Studies on John and Isaiah are abundant, just to list a few: Williams, "He Saw."; C. H. Williams, "Isaiah in John's Gospel," Pages 101–116 in *Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2005); C. H. Williams, "The Testimony of Isaiah and Johannine Christology," Pages 107–124 in *As Those Who Are Taught* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2006); J. V. Dahms, "Isaiah 55:11 and the Gospel of John," *Evangelical Quarterly* 53 (1981): 78–88; S. Moysie and M. J. J. Menken, *Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2005); J. D. M. Derrett, "John 9:6 Read with Isaiah 6:10, 20:9," *Evangelical Quarterly* 66 (1994): 251–254; J. D. M. Derrett, "Miracles, Pools, and Sight: John 9, 1-41; Genesis 2,6-7; Isaiah 6,10; 30,20, 35,5-7," *Bibbia e Oriente* 36 (1994): 71–85; R. L. Tyler, "The Source and Function of Isaiah 6:9-10 in John 12:40," Pages 205–220 in *Johannine Studies* (Malibu, Calif: Pepperdine University Press, 1989).

fail to perceive God takes the form of blindness and deafness, while salvation involves restoration of their sight and hearing, and an appeal thereby to testify to God (Section 7.1). Deliverance is associated with the coming of light out of darkness and the appearance of a saving ‘Servant’ figure who will be exalted and glorified, though his appearance is currently despised (Section 7.2 and 7.3). John quotes the Isaianic curse to explain why people reject the work and the signs of Jesus (John 12:40), and associates the divine glory that Isaiah saw in the throne-room (John 12:41, cf. Isa 6:1–6) with the Servant who is to be glorified (John 12:38, cf. Isa 52:13–53:1).⁸ The salvation and judgment that Jesus brings is depicted as the coming of light in darkness (John 3:19–24; 9:4; 12:35–36) and involves giving sight to the blind (John 9).

The present chapter aims to show that in the Old Testament scriptures that John uses, sense perception is important to divine revelation and the emotional impact of the divine presence. The emphasis on sense perception is accentuated in the literary presentation of divine epiphanies of various kinds, while the theological significance of sense perception in making God known may form one of the grounds of John’s presentation of sense-perceptible revelation in Jesus.

1. Theophany

Theophany is an extraordinary event in which God makes himself known.⁹ It can take many different forms, such as a dream vision (as in Jacob’s Ladder) or a direct vision of fire, smoke and voice (as at the theophany at Mount Sinai). Whatever form it may take, it is always sense-perceptible for there are always two components that accompany theophany: visual and verbal interaction.¹⁰ For example, in Jacob’s encounter with God, he first saw the image of a ladder and angels ascending and descending on the ladder. Then he heard the words of God. Theophanies bridge the

⁸ In Isaiah 52:13, the servant will be ‘exalted and lifted up (יָרִים וְנִשָּׂא).’ The LXX translated it as ‘he will be exalted and greatly glorified (καὶ ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται σφόδρα).’ This phrase is usually linked with Isaiah’s vision of God in Isaiah 6:1: high and lofty (רַם וְנִשָּׂא). See J. N. Oswalt, “Isaiah 52:13–53:12: Servant of All,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 40 (2005): 85–94, at 90.

⁹ For further discussion of theophany, see J. Barr, “Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament,” *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* (1960): 31–38; G. W. Savran, “Theophany as Type Scene,” *Prooftexts* 23 (2003): 119–149; G. W. Savran, *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative* (London: T&T Clark, 2005); J. J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995); S. L. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).

¹⁰ Savran, “Theophany”: 120.

gulf between humans and the divine. Certain knowledge of God is revealed and leads to life-changing transformation of the characters who encounter Him. The purpose of this section is to show how sense perception contributes to the knowledge of God and how this is drawn out more fully through the vividness of the narrative. I limit my discussion to Jacob's Ladder and the theophany event on Mount Sinai because they serve as an important background to the Johannine vision of God.

1.1. Jacob's Ladder (סֹלֶם)¹¹ (Gen 28:10–17)

In Jacob's story, God made himself known to Jacob through a vision in a dream. This encounter with God is very significant for Jacob because this is the first time that God has made himself known to him. Before this event took place, Jacob did not know God personally; that is, seeing God as his God, and not just as the God of his fathers Isaac and Abraham. In this revelation, God says to Jacob:

‘I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring.’ (Gen 28:13–14)

This is the same promise that God gave to Abraham (Gen 12:1) when God first made Himself known to him. God also gave the same promise to Isaac ‘because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws’ (Gen 26:1–5). Now God also appears to Jacob and wants him to ‘Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you’ (Gen 28:15). We see the continuation of the promise of God. The God of Abraham and the God of Jacob's father Isaac now appears to him and promises that He will be with Jacob wherever he goes. Because of the divine revelation, Jacob names this place Bethel, the house of God, and this is where Jacob makes his vow to God. This promise leads

¹¹ There is a debate on the meaning of the word סֹלֶם, see C. Houtman, "What Did Jacob See in His Dream at Bethel? Some Remarks on Genesis 28:10-22," *Vetus Testamentum* 27 (1977): 337–351.

Jacob to build a personal relationship with the Lord under a condition. If God keeps His promise, Jacob says, ‘then the Lord shall be my God’ (Gen 28:21).

However, this encounter with God is only the beginning of his knowledge of God. His knowledge of God is not complete until he returns to Bethel, where he builds an altar for God and calls the place El-Bethel, ‘because it was there that God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother’ (Exod 35:7). It is only when God leads him back to Bethel safely that Jacob truly knows God. Jacob tells his household and all who are with him, ‘Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your clothes; then come, let us go up to Bethel, that I may make an altar there to the God who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone’ (Gen 35:3). It is only then that Jacob truly knows God and worships him alone. His first encounter with God has become a very significant event in his life and can be seen as the beginning of the nation of Israel.

Significantly, this knowledge of God is mediated through sense perception. In his dream, the invisible communication between heaven and earth is perceived by Jacob through visible imagery. This is a dream vision but, although seeing in a dream is not the same as seeing while awake, this does not make the theophany of God less real or less sense-perceptible. Rather, what it probably implies is that human eyes cannot see God directly, and so the theophany has to take place in a dream. Whatever Jacob sees in his dream vision is the true revelation of God. This is supported by the fact that he wakes up with a fear of God (Gen 28:17), a natural response after people have seen God. We take a close look at the text to see how the knowledge of God is mediated through the senses. Jacob’s vision of the ladder is recounted in Genesis 28:10–17:

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed [and behold (וַיַּהֲדֹמָה)] there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and [behold (וַיַּהֲדֹמָה)] the angels of God (מַלְאכֵי אֱלֹהִים) were ascending and descending on it. And [behold (וַיַּהֲדֹמָה)] the Lord stood (נָצַב) beside him and said, ‘I am the Lord,

the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac...Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.’ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!’ And he was afraid, and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’

The visual aspect of Jacob’s dream is described by three clauses beginning with הנה.¹² In Jacob’s dream, there are two elements that serve the cognitive purpose of the knowledge of God. The first is the imagery of the ladder with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. In the Old Testament, seeing angels of God is like seeing God, for a מלאך represents God’s presence.¹³ The ascending and descending of the angels symbolises the dual communication between heaven and earth. This imagery turns the invisible realm into the visible realm. It is seen as the introductory image that leads us to the appearance of the divine.¹⁴ By seeing angels ascending and descending on the ladder, Jacob knows that the Lord is here. This is confirmed by the next use of [behold (והנה)], where God reveals himself personally by standing next to Jacob and speaking to him.¹⁵

In this theophany narrative, there is no description of God’s visual appearance. The divine presence is indicated by the visually oriented term נצב (to stand, Niph. or to set up, Hiph.). This term is used repeatedly in narratives of revelation.¹⁶ The appearance of YHWH replaces the imagery of the ladder because YHWH is now the bridge between heaven and earth.¹⁷ God is made known to Jacob through his seeing the ladder, and then the angels ascending and descending, and finally through perceiving God standing by him.

¹² For the function of this term הנה, see F. I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 95.

¹³ W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (2 vols.; London: SCM, 1961), 1:23–29.

¹⁴ Savran, *Encountering*, 62.

¹⁵ Fokkelman notes how the subjects of the three clauses move from ‘non-qualified’ (the ladder) to ‘maximally qualified’ (YHWH). J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975), 54.

¹⁶ Cf. Gen 18:2; Exod 34:5; Num 22:22–35; 1 Sam 3:10.

¹⁷ Savran, *Encountering*, 63.

In this encounter with God, there are many descriptions that draw the reader into the sensory dimension of God's revelation to Jacob. Note the use of the word 'behold (והנה)' before the ladder, before the angels and before the phrase 'God stood beside him.' This is a verbal cue to invite the reader to imagine, so that they can visualise the ladder, the angels and God standing next to Jacob. To enhance vividness, the narrator also describes in detail how the ladder is positioned. It is set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven. The next description turns this static image into a mobile scene: the angels of God are ascending and descending on it. The verbatim account of the words that God speak to Jacob also helps to draw the reader in. We can see that the narrator, through his emphasis on sense perception, helps the readers to be personally and emotionally involved, so that they can share the emotion of Jacob when he encounters God and can feel the fear at God's presence.

We now turn to the most significant event of theophany, the one that took place on Mount Sinai, to see how sense perception is used there to help the readers to share that experience of the knowledge of God.

1.2. Theophany on Mount Sinai

1.2.1. The Israelites' Perception of God (Exodus 19–20)

The theophany on Mount Sinai is a foundational event for the Israelites. It is at Sinai that God calls Israel into covenant and reconstitutes this tribal society as a 'theocratic state.'¹⁸ This theophany is significant for it shows the Israelites that God is holy and that they should fear Him. The Israelites have already known God through the Exodus miracles, yet their knowledge has been of God acting from one event to the next. They have not yet heard fully how God requires them, as his people, to live. Fear of God in this theophany is connected with the holiness of God.¹⁹ Because of God's holiness, a direct vision of God becomes dangerous and is something to fear. Sense perception helps the Israelites to come to know the ordinances and the laws of God and more importantly, impels them to be obedient by putting the fear of God into them.

¹⁸ Niehaus, *Sinai*, 18.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

The holiness of God is made known to the Israelites in connection with the sense of touch through which they might try to have contact with God's place. Before the revelation of God, the Israelites are told not to touch the foot of the mountain, to keep the mountain holy (Exod 19:23). This is recounted in Exodus 19:12–13:

You shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Be careful not to go up the mountain or to touch (נגע) the edge of it. Any who touch (הנגע) the mountain shall be put to death. No hand shall touch (תגע) them, but they shall be stoned or shot with arrows; whether animal or human being, they shall not live.'

The verb 'touch (נגע)' is used three times. The first time, it appears in an imperative verbal form. The second time, it is used as a participle, 'anyone who touches' and the final appearance is after the subject: 'no hand shall touch'. The act of touching is described in three distinct ways, using different subjects and verbal forms. The emphasis is on the act of touching. It is through the sense of touch that the Israelites learn the holiness of God. They should not come near to the place of God because of God's holiness. The threatened penalty for touching is death. This dire consequence itself would create fear of God but the fear of God is intensified by the visible and audible effects.²⁰ The blast of a trumpet and the steady increase in its volume indicate God's growing proximity and creates fear (Exod 19:16 to 19:19).²¹ Fear of God is also enhanced by the visible fire, thunder and smoke and the trembling of the Israelites and Mount Sinai (Exod 19:16, 18).²² The actual appearance of God is recounted in Exodus 19:16–20:

On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning (קלת) (וברקים), as well as a thick cloud (וענן כבד) on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud (קל שפר חזק מאד) that all the people who were in the camp trembled (ויחרר). Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke (עשן), because the Lord had

²⁰ J. I. Durham, *Exodus* (3 vols.; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 273.

²¹ Savran, *Encountering*, 56.

²² The LXX does not like the idea that the mountain trembled, so it makes the people the subject instead of the mountain and says, ἐξέστη πᾶς ὁ λαὸς σφόδρα (Exod 20:18).

descended (יֵרֵד) upon it in fire (בָּאֵשׁ); the smoke (עָשָׁן) went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook (יָהָרַד) violently. As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. When the Lord descended (וַיֵּרֶד) upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, the Lord summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

In the narrative, the Israelites do not see the face or form of God but only cloud, fire and smoke (Exod 19:18). This is because of God's holiness. God conceals himself in the dense cloud when he reveals himself on Mount Sinai in fire, smoke and thunder. Yet there is a tension between 'not seeing' and 'seeing' in Exodus 19:21, 20:18–20. In Exodus 19:21, the Israelites are warned 'not to break through to the Lord to look (רָאוּת); otherwise many of them will perish.' Whereas previously the prohibition against touching instilled in the Israelites a sense of God's holiness, this time the prohibition against seeing serves that purpose. Paradoxically, however, it is also through the sense of sight that the Israelites are taught about the fear of God. In Exodus 20:18–20, it is emphasised that they 'saw (רָאוּ) the thunder (הַקּוֹלֹת) and lightning, the sound (קוֹל) of the trumpet, and [saw (וַיֵּרֶא)] the mountain smoking and were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance.' The act of seeing creates their fear of God. They are so afraid that they do not dare even to hear God's voice directly (Exod 20:19), but stand at a distance.

Fear of God is the proper response to theophany (cf. Gen 28:10–17; Isa 6:1–2). Its purpose is to prepare the Israelites not only to accept God's laws as their laws, but also to practise them and live a sinless life. The theophany is followed closely by the announcement of God's ten commandments (Exod 20:1–7) and his ordinances (Exod 21:1–23:33). Between these two revelations of statutes, Moses explains the purpose of theophany: 'Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin' (Exod 20:20).

So far, we have examined how the senses contribute to the knowledge of God for the characters in the narrative. Sense perception helps the Israelites to learn God's holiness and puts the fear of God into them, so that they will obey the statutes and laws of God. Senses help give the Israelites knowledge of these statutes in an

effective, and personal way, commanding awe and fear. This emphasis on the significance of senses in this divine revelation is also shown in the literary shaping of the narrative. Beginning with God's announcement of his revelation, we see the emphasis on the sensory dimension. On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone out of Egypt, God said to Moses, 'I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, in order that the people may hear (יִשְׁמַע) when I speak with you and so trust you ever after' (Exod 19:9).

God is to come in a dense cloud that will be visible. God also intends to let the people hear his voice, for he will speak in their hearing. These visible and audible effects help the reader to visualise the scene. The Israelites are asked to consecrate themselves that day and the next day because 'on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people (לְעֵינֵי כָל הָעָם)' (Exod 19:11). This helps the reader to follow the preparation of the Israelites for meeting God. The phrase 'in the sight of all the people' prepares the reader to expect that the theophany will be sense-perceptible.

When we come to the actual appearance of God in Exodus 19:16–20, the narrator uses many sensory details to describe the theophany event, such as thunder and lightning, thick cloud, the loud blast of a trumpet, smoke and fire. These dramatic events conjure visible and audible effects in the mind of the reader. The narrator also emphasises the fear of the people even before they meet God: they all trembled (in Greek, ἐπτοήθη). This also triggers emotion in the reader and helps to draw them personally and emotionally into the theophany event.

The narrator describes what the Israelites saw when they actually came out to meet God:

Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke (עָשָׁן), because the Lord had descended (יָרַד) upon it in fire (בָּאֵשׁ); the smoke (עָשָׁן) went up like the smoke of a kiln (כַּעֲשָׁן הַכִּבְשָׁן), while the whole mountain (כָּל־הָהָר) shook (יָחַרַד) violently (Exod 19:18).

The use of action verbs, such as ‘smoking (עשן),’ ‘shaking (יחרד)’ and ‘descending (ירד)’ makes the scene vivid. The word ‘smoke’ is repeated, as is the verb ‘descended (ירד).’ These repetitions also help the reader to visualise the event. The amplification, ‘the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder,’ creates tension and intensity. All of these sense-perceptible dimensions are intended to draw the readers into the narrative, so that they can visualise the event of theophany, and empathise with the characters and fear God.

1.2.2. Moses’ Perception of God (Exodus 33–34)²³

After the narrative of theophany in Exodus 19–20, we see a lengthy narrative regarding God’s statutes and ordinances (Exod 21–31) and the account of the golden calf follows immediately (Exod 32). The Israelites built this calf and worshiped it as if it was God, therefore, God sent a plague on the people (Exod 32:35). Because of the Israelites’ idolatry, God refused to go before the Israelites (Exod 33:1–3). Moses went to God to plead for the Israelites, so that God’s presence would go with them (Exod 33:12–16). It is within this context that Moses asks to see God’s glory (כבוד) (Exod 33:18), but God grants Moses’ request with a condition. He says to Moses:

‘You cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.’ And the Lord continued, ‘See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory (כבוד) passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see (וראית) my back; but my face shall not be seen (יראו)’ (Exodus 33:20–23).

By asking to see God’s glory, Moses is indeed asking for a ‘theophany.’²⁴ Here, God’s glory can also be seen as God’s ‘face’ and ‘goodness.’²⁵ From this

²³ This passage is considered as part of theophany theme which dominates the book of Exodus. See further in F. H. Polak, "Theophany and Mediator: The Unfolding of a Theme in the Book of Exodus," Pages 113–147 in *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1996).

²⁴ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 435; W. H. Propp, *Exodus* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 2:606.

²⁵ T. B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), 730.

passage we can see that, even though Moses does not see God's face, he does have partial vision of God, namely, the back of God.

After this event, God asks Moses to ascend to Mount Sinai to present himself to him (Exod 34:2–4). Then God descends in the cloud and stood with Moses there (Exod 34:5), and gives the law to Moses (Exod 34:6–28). Moses then came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant without knowing that his face shone. It is recounted as follows:

He did not know that the skin of his face shone (קרן) because he had been talking with God.' When Aaron and all the Israelites saw (וירא) Moses, [behold (והנה)] the skin (עור) of his face was shining (קרן), and they were afraid to come near him.' (Exod 34:29–30)²⁶

There is a strong implication that he sees God even though this is not stated explicitly. This view is supported by the description of Moses' face shining (קרן) after he comes down from the Mountain. There are different interpretations of the verb קרן. It comes from the noun קרן meaning 'ray of light' or 'horn'.²⁷ There are three possible interpretations: 1. Moses' face shone; 2. His skin was 'toughened'²⁸ because of divine fire, and lastly, 3. His forehead sprouted horns.²⁹ Whatever approach scholars take, there is little doubt that this is indeed theophany.³⁰ However, most scholars refers to Habakkuk 3:4 and interpret this as the radiance of God reflected on Moses' face.³¹ Haran also finds the parallel of Moses' shining face in the *melammu* in ancient Near Eastern iconography.³²

²⁶ For detailed discussions on Moses' shining face and the veil, see T. B. Dozeman, "Masking Moses and Mosaic Authority in Torah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119 (2000): 21–45; S. L. Sanders, "Old Light on Moses' Shining Face," *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002): 400–406; J. M. Philpot, "Exodus 34:29–35 and Moses' Shining Face," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 23 (2013): 1–11; J. Morgenstern, "Moses with the Shining Face," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 2 (1925): 1–27.

²⁷ Dozeman, *Exodus*, 750.

²⁸ See further W. H. Propp, "The Skin of Moses' Face - Transfigured or Disfigured," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987): 375–386.

²⁹ For scholars who support this view, see Propp, *Exodus*, 2:620; Dozeman, "Moses": 23.

³⁰ Dozeman, "Moses": 21.

³¹ Dozeman, *Exodus*, 751; R. W. L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32–34* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 109; Cassuto, *Exodus*, 448. For the closest parallel to the shining of Moses' face in ancient Near Eastern anthropology, see M. Haran, "The Shining of Moses' Face: A Case Study in Biblical and Ancient near Eastern Iconography," Pages 159–173 in *In the Shelter of Elyon* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984).

³² Haran, "Moses' Face," 159.

This suggests that Moses enjoys a privileged intimacy with God and is able to speak with him. This personal encounter with God is so intense that God's glory remains with him and makes his face shine.³³ This reflection of the divine glory 'has now become immanent in the human world as a visible indication of the mediator's position between the human and the divine, and as a reminder of the theophany.'³⁴ God does not allow Moses to see his face, but God's glory remains with Moses and invades his face with divine radiance.³⁵ Moses is seen as the mediator of the law, who stands between God and the people. The Israelites are not able to behold God's glory, but they can behold Moses, who reflects God's glory,³⁶ through whom God's glory can be seen.³⁷

Despite the tradition that God cannot be seen, all these passages show that divine revelation is mediated through the senses and the MT does not seek to soften this. The visible encounters with God are significant in these text, and not only that, they also validate the theophanic experience.³⁸ The emphasis on the senses in these narratives of theophany is intended to make the Israelites appreciate God's holiness and learn to fear God. This is also shown after Moses' encounter with God. His shining face causes fear in the people. This fear is the motivation for their obedience to God's laws and commandments and their submission to God's mediator, Moses. Through these sensory descriptions, the readers, even though not present at the scene, can visualise the event and be drawn into the narrative personally and emotionally. As a result, they can share the participants' fear of God.

Throughout the history of Israel, there are two foundational events of which the Israelites are constantly reminded: the theophany at Mount Sinai and the Exodus miracles. The Israelites are consistently reminded of how they have seen God and how God brought them out of Egypt by his mighty acts (Deut 1:9; 5:24; 29:2; Jer 32:20; Ezek 20:9). Just like theophany, all of these mighty acts performed in the sight of the Egyptians serve the purpose of making God known. In the next section, by

³³ Cassuto, *Exodus*, 449.

³⁴ Polak, "Theophany," 147.

³⁵ Dozeman, *Exodus*, 731.

³⁶ Moberly, *Exodus*, 106.

³⁷ Ibid., 107.

³⁸ Savran, *Encountering*, 52.

looking at the narrative of the Exodus miracles, we examine how sense perception is used as a means of bringing readers to knowledge of God.

2. The Exodus Miracles

When God appears to Moses in the bush, he makes his name known for the first time to Moses (Exod 3:13). This knowledge of God is now going to be revealed to the Israelites and the Egyptians through the ten wonders that God will perform in the land of Egypt. This is significant for it suggests that the knowledge of God can be mediated through the senses. God appeared to the ancestors of the Israelites, but never made his name known to them. It is stated right at the beginning of the narrative of Moses' encounter with God, that this is the first time that God will make his name (יהוה) known to the Israelites. God says to Moses:

I am the Lord (אני יהוה). I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name 'The Lord' (יהוה) I did not make myself known to them....Say therefore to the Israelites, 'I am the Lord (אני יהוה), and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the Lord (אני יהוה) your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians. (Exod 6:2–7)

This passage indicates that YHWH's purpose in taking them out of Egypt is to let the Israelites know that YHWH is taking them as His people and they will know Him as their God. This is underscored throughout the narratives of the Exodus miracles by the repeated use of the phrase 'so that they/you' may know that I am the Lord' (יהוה) cf. Exod 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29, 30; 10:2; 11:7, 14:4, 18; 16:6, 12).

In the plagues of Egypt, knowledge of God, or at least of his power, comes through the senses. In the plague of hail where death is caused, God says to Pharaoh, this plague is happening 'so that you may know that there is no one like me in all the

earth' (Exod 9:14). God is not only the God of the Hebrews, but also God in the land of Egypt and in all the earth. This is emphasised again when Pharaoh asks Moses to stop the hail. Moses says to him, 'I will stretch out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord's' (Exod 9:29). In the first (Exod 7:14), second (Exod 8:10), fourth (Exod 8:22) and the seventh wonder, (Exod 10:2) the narrator explicitly associates the signs with the knowledge of God by repeating the expression 'know that I am the Lord,' and the power and sovereignty of God is made known gradually through each wonder. In the last wonder, by killing only the firstborn of the Egyptians, God lets them 'know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel' (Exod 11:7). What the Egyptians and Israel will learn from this wonder is that Lord has shown favour to Israel over Egypt.

There are two groups of people in this event who need to accept and act on the knowledge of God: the Israelites and the Egyptians. They ought to acknowledge God by perceiving and experiencing these miracles. Yet the Egyptians fail to grasp the significance of these sense-perceptible miracles. Even after suffering these miracles physically, they still do not know God. It is explained in the narrative that the Lord has hardened their hearts (Exod 4:21, 7:3, 9:12; 10: 1; 14:8, 17). As much as the knowledge of God can be attained through sense-perceptible signs and wonders, not all who have perceived these signs can grasp the knowledge of God. That is to say sense perception alone is inconclusive. It can give knowledge of God, but it can also singularly fail to do so. Nevertheless, the narrative of the Exodus miracles suggests that knowledge of God can be mediated through sense perception and makes this central to Israel's awareness of their own special relationship with the God in whom they trust. Through the Exodus events, the Israelites are to become the witnesses of God to tell their children and their grandchildren what God has done for them, so that they may know that YHWH is the Lord (Exod 10:2).

The narrative style enhances the sensory dimension of the revelatory events. All of the plague accounts have a dramatic and emphatic sensory aspect. The readers can imagine the extent to which the senses of sight, hearing and smell would have been assailed. There are several literary techniques that are used to create this sensory impact. The following are prominent:

- (1) The use of action verbs. Action verbs make the static scenes active and thus achieve vividness. For example, in the first wonder, the mention of Moses' actions of 'lifting up the staff' and 'striking the water in the river' has the reader imagine those people seeing the splash of the water and hearing the sound caused by the striking.³⁹
- (2) Repetition. We often see that the narrator repeats words or phrases to describe a plague or emphasise the effect of a plague and this too helps to create vividness. For example, by repeating the phrases 'the dust of the earth (עפר הקרץ)' and gnats 'throughout the whole land of Egypt (בכל ארץ מצרים)' (Exod 8:16), the narrator not only enhances vividness, but also implies the multiplication of the gnats. The repetition of the phrase that 'gnats came on humans and animals alike (הכנם באדם ובהמה)' also amplifies the level of terror and increases the unpleasant emotion by triggering the readers' disgust at this unpleasant sensory touch.⁴⁰
- (3) Verbal cues to invite readers to imagine. The word 'behold (הנה)' is often used before the description of a plague. This is to draw readers' attention and invite them to imagine, for example, '[behold (הנה)] the hand of the Lord will strike with a deadly pestilence your livestock in the field' (Exodus 9:3) The pestilence itself is invisible, but the narrator uses a visual image to describe it: the hand of God will strike with pestilence.⁴¹

³⁹ We find a similar technique used in the narrative of the first sign that Moses performs, turning a staff into a snake: Moses 'threw the staff on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses drew back from it. Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Reach out your hand, and seize it by the tail'—so he reached out his hand and grasped it, and it became a staff in his hand' (Exod 4:2–5). These action verbs, such as 'throw,' 'reach out,' 'seize' and 'grasp,' create a scene that is vivid and mobile. In the second sign (Exod 4:6–7), the main action is the movement of Moses' hand. We see three different verbs used to describe this action: put (בוא), take out (יצא), restore (שׁורב). They are used all together seven times in such a short passage. It helps to create a vivid scene.

⁴⁰ In the plague of flies (Exod 8:21–24), the repeated use of prepositions locating the flies on the people shows that it is not just a static scene in the mind's eye but a scene of sending the flies *onto* the people (In LXX, ἐπί + accusative, not ἐπί + dative or genitive); thus we perceive it in action.

⁴¹ The word 'behold (הנה)' used as a verbal cue to invite imagination can also be seen in the narrative of the second sign (Exod 4:6–7) and the plague of flies (Exod 8:21–24).

- (4) Contrast to make scenes vivid. This is particularly striking in the plague of darkness where the Israelites all have light and the land of Egypt is in total darkness (Exodus 10:21–23).⁴²
- (5) Detailing particular objects or action. Sometimes the narrator only describes a particular action to enhance vividness, such as when God tells Moses and Aaron to ‘take handfuls of soot from the kiln and throw it into the air.’ This helps the readers envisage the whole scene where the soot falls on the Egyptians and animals and causes festering boils (Exod 9:8–9).⁴³
- (6) Disclosing information slowly to create emotional impact. We find this in the narrative of the plague of hail. The plague is briefly announced as follows: ‘For this time I will send all my plagues upon you yourself, and upon your officials, and upon your people’ (Exod 9:14). The narrator does not announce what kind of plague it is in the beginning. It is only after the announcement of the purpose of this plague (Exod 9:16) that the narrator describes in more detail what this plague is about: ‘Tomorrow at this time I will cause the heaviest hail to fall that has ever fallen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now’ (Exod 9:18). In the description of the disaster (Exod 9:23–26), the narrator first uses a general statement to describe the disaster: the hail struck down everything that was in an open field throughout all the land of Egypt. Then he adds more detail, both human and animal. Finally, he concludes, ‘the hail also struck down all the plants of the field, and shattered every tree in the field’ (Exod 9:25). The destruction caused by the heavy hail is extensive and wholesale. Through the detailed description of the disaster and the anxiety created by disclosing the details slowly, the readers can imagine the horror and the fear that

⁴² This contrast can also be found in the plague of flies (Exodus 8:21–24) and in the plague of pestilence which killed all the livestock in the land of Egypt (Exod 9:1–7).

⁴³ In the first sign, the description of the particular action in which Moses can seize the snake by the tail also enhances vividness (Exod 4:2–5). Also, in the plague of locusts (Exod 10:12–15), the account that ‘the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night’ creates such vividness for it tells the readers where and how the locusts were sent.

these characters must have felt witnessing this extraordinary meteorological phenomenon.

- (7) Full, detailed description, such as we find in the plagues of frogs, locusts and hail. This is the most common technique used to achieve vividness. For example, the narrator uses a very detailed description of where the frogs will be. First, they will appear in the river, then come up to the palace, into the bedchamber and bed. The intensification of the effect is enhanced as the places where the frogs will be become more and more intimate. The description that these frogs will even come into ovens and kneading bowls increases the level of horror. These narratives create a vivid picture of how the land is full of frogs and one can imagine the disastrous consequence. The detailed description helps the readers to imagine what an effect that would have in terms of sight, noise and smell.⁴⁴

The narrator strives to achieve vividness by appealing to the senses in order to increase the emotional impact on his readers, the following generations of Israelites, to assure and remind them of the power of their God. By triggering their emotions and their imagination, he helps them to visualise these events as if they are witnessing them. The main emotions are two. First, fear, because the wonders that God did in the land of Egypt are not things that anyone has experienced; and secondly, at the same time, astonishment, because of the extent of God's mighty power. This emotional impact enhances their knowledge of God and makes them into witnesses to God.

Our discussion shows that in the foundational events of the Jewish tradition, God reveals himself in sense-perceptible ways. He reveals himself through his visible signs and wonders and through fire and sound as we see in the theophany on Mount Sinai. This emphasis on sense perception in the revelation of God makes possible testimony of God's deeds and works. This is shown in the use of 'we (you) saw' in Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy, those who 'saw' are considered to be witnesses of God's faithfulness. The motif of the eyewitness and the appeal to the senses are

⁴⁴ See also Exod 9:13–35; 10:4–6.

significant in Deuteronomy and they serve a special purpose. We look now at some passages in Deuteronomy where a communal vision is emphasised.

3. Communal Vision in Deuteronomy

In Deuteronomy, we find emphasis on communal vision, as in ‘we saw’ or ‘you have seen’ or similar expressions in other verbal forms. This phrase is used in the context of testifying to the mighty acts of God and to how God brought them out of Egypt. The use of this rhetorical eyewitness language has a special purpose that is related to Deuteronomy’s special concern with memory, which is expressed in terms like ‘remember,’⁴⁵ and ‘do not forget’ (Deut 6:12; 8:11, 9:7). It is fair to say that ‘memory’ is a feature of Deuteronomy because of the extensive and significant use of the verb זָכַר (to remember).⁴⁶ The Israelites are encouraged to *remember* that they were once slaves in the land of Egypt and the Lord brought them out from there (Deut 5:15; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:18, 22); *remember* what God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt (7:18); *remember* the way that the Lord led them forty years in the wilderness (Deut 8:2, 12) and *remember* how they provoked God to wrath in the wilderness (Deut 9:7). The exhortation that Israelites should remember that they were once slaves is repeated many times throughout Deuteronomy and this memory motif is significant in understanding the communal vision in Deuteronomy. The author of Deuteronomy hopes that through their memory of the past, the Israelites will diligently obey God’s ordinances and statutes and thus have knowledge of God (Deut 4:35), and ultimately, make God known to the nations. The communal vision is to serve this purpose.

This rhetorical use of communal vision is to ‘actualise’ the realities of Israel’s past in the minds of new generations. By repeating the past and remembering it, all generations of Israel are encouraged to remember and obey God’s commandments, which is a form of knowing God. The rhetorical use of eyewitness language and sense

⁴⁵ Cf. Deut. 5:15; 7:18; 8:2, 18; 9:7, 27; 15:15, 19; 16:12; 24:9, 18, 22; 25:17, 19; 32:7.

⁴⁶ For discussion on the memory motif in Deuteronomy, see E. P. Blair, "Appeal to Remembrance: The Memory Motif in Deuteronomy," *Interpretation* 15 (1961): 41–47; R. O'Dowd, "Memory on the Boundary: Epistemology in Deuteronomy," Pages 3–22 in *Bible and Epistemology* (eds. M. Healy and R. Parry; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007). For the topic of memory in the Old Testament, see B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London: SCM, 1962); A. Leveen, *Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

perception is in this regard helpful in drawing the future readers into the narrative, not merely for literary purposes but also for religious and devotional ones.

All generations of Israelite readers are included in this communal vision, even though not all of them were original eyewitnesses. The emphasis on ‘we saw’ is related to obedience to God’s testimonies, statutes and ordinances. The only way that the Israelites can testify to God before other nations is by observing the statutes and ordinances of God (Deut 4:6) and these statutes and ordinances were given when God revealed them to the Israelites on Mount Sinai. The audience in the narrative comprises two groups of people: the old generation who witnessed the Exodus miracles and theophany on Mount Sinai and the new generation who were removed from these events (Deut 1:35–40). The latter are in the same position as all later readers who have no direct sensory experience of the miracles and theophany. Even though they have not themselves been eyewitnesses of the divine revelation, Moses uses this sensory language to undergird their obedience to the testimonies, statutes, and laws. He tells the Israelites:

But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen (רֵאוּ עֵינֶיךָ) nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known (הוֹדִיעֶתֶם) to your children and your children’s children—how you once stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when the Lord said to me, ‘Assemble the people for me, and I will let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me as long as they live on the earth, and may teach their children so.’ (Deut 4:9–10)

Even though the readers were not present at the theophany, the author includes them all as eyewitnesses of the event by appealing to communal vision, ‘your eyes have seen.’ He reminds the Israelites that they have seen with their own eyes how God has been revealed to them, and this divine revelation became the basis for their obedience to the statutes and the ordinances. That divine revelation is the basis of their testimony and they are to bear this testimony and make it known to their children and their children’s children. The rhetorical use of the language of eyewitness and sense perception helps the readers to visualise the past and actualise it in the present.

To help them to visualise the theophany, Moses also recounts the event of theophany in detail:

You approached and stood at the foot of the mountain while the mountain was blazing up to the very heavens, shrouded in dark clouds. Then the Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. He declared to you his covenant, which he charged you to observe, that is, the ten commandments; and he wrote them on two stone tablets. And the Lord charged me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances for you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy (Deut 4:9–10).

Moses points out several key scenes that can help them visualise the event, such as ‘standing at the foot of the mountain while the mountain was blazing up to the heavens, shrouded in dark clouds,’ ‘God spoke to you out of the fire’ and ‘you heard the sound of words, but saw no form.’⁴⁷ Through visualising these events, the readers are turned into witnesses, even though they were not present. For those who did witness the event, Moses’ call is for them to recall their knowledge of God. We find a similar usage of this communal vision when Moses recasts the Exodus miracles. Some of the people to whom Moses speaks are not the eyewitnesses of the Exodus miracles, yet Moses speaks to them as if they were, since they have heard of them from their parents.⁴⁸ He says:

Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by terrifying displays of power, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very

⁴⁷ Compared with the narrative of theophany in Exodus, Deuteronomy adds some details, such as the Lord spoke ‘at [Horeb] out of the fire’ (Deut 4:12, 15; 5:24). It also emphasises the fact that the Israelites ‘saw no form, only a voice’ (Deut 4:12, 15). While the Sinai event in Exodus is dominated by the visual, the recasting of the Sinai theophany in Deuteronomy 4 is often regarded as audio-centric. G. W. Savran, “Seeing Is Believing: On the Relative Priority of Visual and Verbal Perception of the Divine,” *Biblical Interpretation* 17 (2009): 320–361.

⁴⁸ J. H. Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 46.

eyes? (לעיניך) To you it was shown so that you would acknowledge (לדעת) that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him. (Deut. 4:34–35)

The great trials that your eyes saw (ראו עיניך), the signs and wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out. The Lord your God will do the same to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. (Deut 7:19)

Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: You have seen (ראיתם) all that the Lord did before your eyes (לעיניכם) in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials that your eyes saw (ראו עיניך), the signs, and those great wonders. (Deut 29:2–3)

Moses uses the rhetorical language of the eyewitness, such as ‘before your eyes’ and ‘your eyes saw,’ to make the readers empathise, so that they will not forget what God has done for them and will know that ‘the Lord is God; there is no other besides him.’ If we look at the immediate context of these three passages, we find that they are both used in the context where the hearers are told to observe God’s commandments diligently and keep God’s covenant (e.g. Deut 4:31–40; 7:12–8:1; 29:1–29). The remembrance of God’s mighty acts, which the Israelites have seen with their own eyes, has a significant purpose: that the Israelites obey and keep the commandments of God, which is a form of the knowledge of God.

The rhetorical use of eyewitness language with sense perception plays a significant role in attaining knowledge of God. Those who witnessed the Exodus miracles and the theophany can recall those events, and hence, know to keep God’s laws and remain faithful in the covenantal relationship with God. Those removed in time from these events are included through communal vision, so that they can also remember what God has done for them and obey God’s commandments. Thus the rhetoric of eyewitness experience is used to undergird their obedience to the testimonies, statutes and ordinances.

The ordinances that the Israelites are to obey are placed in the ark of testimony in the tabernacle. The tabernacle is a visible object which reminds the Israelites of God's presence and of the deeds of God. It is a physical continuation of the memory of God's mighty work. We now look at one last example from the Pentateuch where sense perception and testimony are used together: the tabernacle of testimony.

4. The Tabernacle and the Ark of Testimony⁴⁹

After God's revelation on Mount Sinai, where he makes a covenant with the Israelites (Exod 34:10), God commands Moses to build an ark and a tabernacle as his dwelling place, representing his presence among the people. This is significant because, even after the Israelites have seen God, they forget God's commandments when God appears to be absent.⁵⁰ The building of the golden calf is the best example. The Israelites sinned right after the theophany and broke the second commandment of God by making a golden calf as the image of God (Exod 32:1–6).

The significance of the Tabernacle in relation to the knowledge of God is twofold. First, through the building of the Tabernacle, the Israelites learn to obey God's commandments. The phrase that the Israelites did all of the work just as 'the Lord had commanded Moses' (Exod 35:29, 39:1; 5, 7, 21, 26, 32, 42; 40:32) is repeated many times in the narratives of the tabernacle. The Israelites learn to submit to God's authority and sovereignty by following every instruction of God. It is only after they obey God's commandment that they can experience the presence of God.⁵¹ This leads to the second aspect of the significance of the tabernacle.

The Israelites learn that the way that God chooses to be present with them is by dwelling among them in the tabernacle. God says, 'have them make me a

⁴⁹ For general discussion on the tabernacle and the ark, see J. O. Lewis, "Ark and the Tent," *Review & Expositor* 74 (1977): 537–548; J. Morgenstern, "The Ark, the Ephod, and the 'Tent of Meeting'," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 17 (1942): 153–266; J. Morgenstern, "The Ark, the Ephod, and the 'Tent of Meeting' (Continued from Volume XVII)," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 18 (1944): 1–52; B. D. Sommer, "Conflicting Constructions of Divine Presence in the Priestly Tabernacle," *Biblical Interpretation* 9 (2001): 41–63; M. Haran, "The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 36 (1965): 191–226; J. A. Scott, "The Priestly Tabernacle," *Restoration Quarterly* 9 (1966): 295–299; S. Spero, "From Tabernacle (Mishkan) and Temple (Mikdash) to Synagogue (Bet Keneset)," *Tradition* 38 (2004): 60–85.

⁵⁰ Terrien, *Presence*, 163.

⁵¹ Spero, "Tabernacle": 63.

sanctuary, so that I may dwell (ושכנתי) among them' (Exod 25:8). The translator of LXX emphasises the sensory aspect of this dwelling, and thus translates it as 'ὁφθῆσομαι ἐν ὑμῖν (I may be seen among you).' The fact that God will dwell among the people is emphasised again in Exodus 29:45–46:

I will dwell (שכנתי) among the Israelites, and I will be their God. And they shall know (וידעו) that I am the Lord their God (אלהיהם יהוה), who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell (לשכני) among them; I am the Lord their God (אלהיהם יהוה).

This language of dwelling is used in connection with the knowledge of God and Exodus miracles. We see the repetition of 'dwelling' and 'I am the Lord their God' (Ex 25:8; 29:45). God's presence is seen in sense-perceptible objects: the ark of tabernacle and the ark of testimony.

This visible presence of God is emphasised after the tabernacle is set up. It is written:

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting (אהל מועד), and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (המשכן). Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord (כבוד יהוה) filled the tabernacle (המשכן). Whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on each stage of their journey; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, before the eyes (לעיני) of all the house of Israel at each stage of their journey. (Exod 40:34–38)

The tabernacle is palpable, as is the presence of God, which is purely visual in this passage. It is represented by the visible cloud and fire before the eyes of all the Israelites. The Israelites need to know that God is among them and will keep His promise. This assurance is to help them to face the difficulties ahead. They already know God's mighty power in the Exodus miracles. They have also known God

personally on Mount Sinai where God built a covenantal relationship with them. Now they need to know that this powerful God will dwell among them if they obey all of his commandments. This is what makes the imagery of tabernacle significant in relation to the knowledge of God.

At the literary level, the tabernacle is visualized in the narratives of its construction.⁵² The account starts with the divine perspective, which includes a great deal of description of the physical appearance of the ark, the tabernacle and its court (Exod 25–27), from the ark that is to be put inside the tabernacle to the tent that covers the tabernacle (Exod 26:7–13), the covering that is over the tent (Exod 26:14) and finally the tabernacle and the court of the tabernacle (Exod 27). All of these requirements are recorded in detail from Moses' and the builders' perspective when they fulfill them (Exod 35–40).

The expression, 'the ark of testimony (אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת),' occurs several times elsewhere in Exodus and it is always translated as *καβωτὸς τοῦ μαρτυρίου* in LXX (Exod 25:10; 26:33; 30:6, 26; 35:12; 40:3), except in 31:7 and 39:14 [39:35], where the translation used is *καβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης*. This expression (אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת) is replaced by 'the ark of covenant of the Lord (אֲרוֹן בְּרִית יְהוָה)' in Deuteronomy 10:8 and 31:25 and there the LXX corresponds to the Hebrew text with *τὴν καβωτὸν τῆς διαθήκης*. Nevertheless, LXX in Deuteronomy always translates the expression 'tent of meeting' as *σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου* (Deut 31:14). In Exodus, 'the tent of meeting (אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד)' is always translated as *σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου* (LXX Exod 27:21, 28:43; 29:4, 10, 30, 32, 42, 44; 30:26, 36; 31:7; 38:26; 40:2, 12, 34).⁵³ The reason that the LXX uses *μαρτυρίου* with the tent is probably due simply to the fact that the tent is where the ark of 'testimony (עֵדוּת)' is placed.⁵⁴ This is further supported by the fact that the

⁵² M. K. George, "Israelite Aniconism and the Visualization of the Tabernacle," *Journal of Religion & Society* 8 (2012): 45.

⁵³ Some scholars regard 'the Tent of Meeting' as another term for 'the Tabernacle.' J. W. Wevers, *Septuaginta: Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1991), 442. John van Seters, however, sees it as a term used by the J source, while the term 'Tabernacle' belongs to the P source. According to him, these terms denote different meanings. For J, the tent of meeting (Exod 33:7–11) is a portable structure where God meets with Moses and speaks to him from time to time. When God comes to meet Moses, the pillar of cloud would stand at the door of the tent (Exod 33:9–10). P takes over this function of the Tent of Meeting and combines it with the Tabernacle. The pillar of cloud and fire becomes the glory of God, which filled the tabernacle (Exod 40:34–38). J. van Seters, *The Pentateuch: A Social-Science Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 173–174.

⁵⁴ Wevers, *LXX: Exodus*, 442.

LXX translates אֲרוֹן, as κιβωτὸς μαρτυρίου (Exod 25:10), even though there is no mention of ‘testimony,’ but only of ‘ark’ in MT.⁵⁵ This strong emphasis on testimony in connection with the tent in the MT and LXX makes the combination of tent and testimony significant. The tabernacle is not only the place where the people come to meet God, thus ‘tent of meeting,’ but also a place that testifies to the ‘reality’ and the faithfulness of God.⁵⁶ It is a place where humans can meet the divine and what makes this possible is the covenantal relationship between God and the Israelites. Thus, the tabernacle is not only a tent of meeting but also a tent of testimony which testifies to God’s presence among his people and the covenantal relationship between God and the people.

So far we have seen how the knowledge of God is made available to God’s people through theophany, the Exodus miracles and the tabernacle. In each of these, different aspects of God are revealed. In the next section, we see different ways in which God is revealed. This revelation is mediated through senses also, though in a very different form, that is, through the signs and symbolic actions of prophets. We will also see some examples of this kind of divine revelation taken from the books of the prophets. We will subsequently focus on the book of Isaiah, the most relevant to our study of John in relation to the themes of light and darkness, blindness and trial.

5. Prophetic Sign-acts⁵⁷

In the Old Testament, the prophetic sign-acts have the purpose of foretelling the future of a person or a nation.⁵⁸ The sign-acts are not essentially human acts, but also symbols which effectively reveal the knowledge of the mind and acts of God. For

⁵⁵ For further discussion of this verse in the LXX, see *ibid.*, 396.

⁵⁶ Spero, "Tabernacle": 65.

⁵⁷ These prophetic sign-acts are sometimes referred to as ‘prophetic symbolic actions.’ I use the term ‘sign-acts’ because these acts represent more than the symbolic. W. Zimmerli, *The Fiery Throne: The Prophets and Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 110.

⁵⁸ Many scholars have discussed the theme of prophetic symbolic acts in the Old Testament, see W. H. Robinson, "Prophetic Symbolism," Pages 1–17 in *Old Testament Essays* (London: C. Griffin, 1927); T. W. Overholt, "Seeing Is Believing: The Social Setting of Prophetic Acts of Power," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (1982): 3–31; W. J. Houston, "What Did the Prophets Think They Were Doing? Speech Acts and Prophetic Discourse in the Old Testament," *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993): 167–188; M. P. Matheney, "Interpretation on Hebrew Prophetic Symbolic Act," *Encounter* 29 (1968): 256–267. Some focus on specific books in the Old Testament, such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel. See J. Adler, "The Symbolic Acts of Ezekiel (Chapters 3–5)," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 19 (1990–91): 120–122; Zimmerli, *Throne*, 110–112; K. G. Friebel, *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999).

example, the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh tears his new garment into twelve pieces and gives Jeroboam ten of them. He then announces the decision of God concerning the future of Jeroboam: 'See, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and will give you ten tribes' (1 Kg 11:31). Isaiah also performs several sign-acts. One of them is that he walks around naked and barefoot for three years as 'a sign and a portent against Egypt and Ethiopia, so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as captives and the Ethiopians as exiles' (Isa 20:2–4).⁵⁹

The sign-acts are found most prominently in the books of Jeremiah (Jer 13:1–11; 16:1–9; 19:1–15; 27–28; 32:1–15; 40:8–13; 51:59–64) and Ezekiel (Ezek 3:22–27; 4:1–3, 4–8, 9–11, 12–15; 5:1–3; 12:1–16, 17–20; 21:11–12, 23–29; 24:15–24; 37:15–28).⁶⁰ Sometimes the prophets themselves become signs for the people. For example, Jeremiah's yoke signifies the bondage of the Israelites, meaning that they should submit to Babylon in order to live (Jer 27–28). Ezekiel's journey from home is a portent that Israel will go into exile (Ezek 12:1–6). Most of these sign-acts are intentionally and effectively performed to be signs and portents for coming events, but there are a few exceptions, such as Jeremiah 13:1–2 and Ezekiel 4:4–5.⁶¹ Whether they point to future or to past events, they are a nonverbal communication of the divine and they are meant to be persuasive.⁶² Since Ezekiel performed far more sign-acts than other prophets, the book of Ezekiel is the focus of our study.

These sign-acts are usually followed by speeches from God, which explain the meaning of these sign-acts and indicate their purpose. Most of them portend what will happen to the Israelites, yet unless God reveals their meaning, no one can understand their significance. Ezekiel performs sign-acts as commanded by God in order to convey God's message to the Israelites and foretell their future: judgment will come upon Jerusalem in the sight of the nations because the Israelites have rebelled against God's ordinances and statutes (Ezek 4:1–5:17). The Israelites do not expect that God

⁵⁹ For a survey of the symbolic acts of the prophets, see G. Fohrer, *Die symbolischen Handlungen der Propheten* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1953).

⁶⁰ Some scholars argued that these sign acts did not really happen or that they were performed unconsciously. This view is refuted by Matheney, "Interpretation": 256; Fohrer, *Handlungen*, 49–69; Friebe, *Sign-Acts*, 20–34. Robinson believed that these sign acts really happened, but he argued that they resemble 'mimetic magic.' Robinson, "Symbolism," 2.

⁶¹ See further discussion in Friebe, *Sign-Acts*, 51–52.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 53.

will punish his own people by sending them into exile, for this is something that God had never yet done (or will ever do again) (Ezek 5:9). Yet through these sign-acts, they will know that God will execute judgment on Jerusalem because of her abominations. These sign-acts, which signify God's judgment, serve the purpose of making God's will known. Through His judging of the nations and of Israel, God declares that all people 'shall know that I am the Lord' (Ezek 5:13; 6:7, 10, 13, 14; 11:10, 12; 12: 15, 16, 20; 24:19). Not all of the sign-acts point to future judgment on the Israelites. One points to the future restoration of Israel:

Thus says the Lord God: I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms. They shall never again defile themselves with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. I will save them from all the apostasies into which they have fallen, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (Ezek 37:21–23)

Ultimately, the purpose of these sign-acts is that Israel should perceive and understand, so as to turn away from their disobedience and abominations and acknowledge YHWH as their God.

The knowledge of God is conveyed to the people in two ways: verbally through Ezekiel's speeches and non-verbally through the sign-acts that Ezekiel performs.⁶³ These sign-acts are, by nature, visible to the audience. In Ezekiel, we find a special emphasis on the sense-perceptible aspect of mediating the knowledge of God. We will use three examples to illustrate this. The first is the eating of the scroll recounted in Ezekiel 3:1–3:

⁶³ For the discussion of sign-acts as nonverbal communication, see *ibid.*, 79–369.

He said to me, O mortal, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. He said to me, Mortal, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it. Then I ate it; and in my mouth it was as sweet as honey.

The figure of speech that God's words are edible can be found in Jeremiah 15:16 and in Psalm 119:103. But what is striking in Ezekiel is that this figure of speech is made a 'dramatic reality.'⁶⁴ Ezekiel sees the words of God before him in the form of a scroll and he is asked to eat it. He can even taste the words of God, which are as sweet as honey. These words are the words of God, which he will convey to the people of Israel.

The second example is recounted in Ezekiel 5:1:

And you, O mortal, take a sharp sword; use it as a barber's razor and run it over your head and your beard; then take balances for weighing, and divide the hair.

We find a similar expression in Isaiah 7:20: 'On that day the Lord will shave with a razor hired beyond the River – with the king of Assyria – the head and the hair of the feet, and it will take off the beard as well.' This is again a figure of God's judgment to come. But, in Ezekiel, this figurative expression is developed into a dramatic visible gesture. Ezekiel shaves his hair and beard as a sign to the Israelites.

Finally, we take Ezekiel 12:1–6 as a literary example to show how the narrative is made to appeal to senses in order to convey the knowledge of God to the Israelites. God's words come to Ezekiel:

Mortal, you are living in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes (עינים) to see (לראות) but do not see (ראו ולא) who have ears (אזניים) to hear (לשמע) but do not hear (שמעו ולא); for they are a rebellious

⁶⁴ Zimmerli, *Throne*, 112.

house. Therefore, mortal, prepare for yourself an exile's baggage, and go into exile by day in their sight (לעיניהם); you shall go like an exile from your place to another place in their sight (לעיניהם). Perhaps they will understand (יראו), though they are a rebellious house. You shall bring out your baggage by day in their sight, as baggage for exile; and you shall go out yourself at evening in their sight (לעיניהם), as those do who go into exile. Dig through the wall in their sight (לעיניהם), and carry the baggage through it. In their sight (לעיניהם) you shall lift the baggage on your shoulder, and carry it out in the dark; you shall cover your face, so that you may not see the land (תראה); for I have made you a sign for the house of Israel.

The repetition and emphasis on the phrase 'in their sight (לעיניהם)' shows that God wants each action to be seen by the people.⁶⁵ The spectators are not only witnesses testifying that Ezekiel has performed these actions, but also 'participatory witnesses' in these events who are to respond to the implication of his messages.⁶⁶ God hopes that the Israelites, upon seeing these sign-acts, will repent and return to Him. If they do not, they will eventually go into exile as Ezekiel has shown by his symbolic action. God makes Ezekiel a sign (אות) for the house of Israel. At the beginning of this narrative, God speaks of the spiritual blindness and deafness of these people. Yet, He still hopes that, through seeing these sign-acts, they will know that He will execute judgment on them. God expresses this hope and says, 'Perhaps they will understand (יראו literally: 'see'), though they are a rebellious house.' Visible symbolic action is used by God as a means of showing that He wants to convey knowledge to the people, despite the fact that they continue to suffer from spiritual blindness and deafness.

6. The Book of Isaiah

The book of Isaiah is particularly significant for this dissertation because it is considered by most Johannine scholars to be the background of many Johannine

⁶⁵ Friebe and Fohrer both argue that the phrase 'in sight of' is evidence that these sign acts are really performed and these people are eyewitnesses. Friebe, *Sign-Acts*, 26; Fohrer, *Handlungen*, 103.

⁶⁶ Friebe, *Sign-Acts*, 26.

themes, such as blindness and deafness, darkness and light, the 'I am' statements, the theme of the servant and the play on physical and metaphorical senses, the use of sense perception with testimony. Not only that, sense perception and human actions are greatly emphasised.⁶⁷ The language of sense perception is used throughout the book of Isaiah, especially in Isaiah 1: 5–6; 6:1, 7; 21:5; 11:3; 44:16; 49:16; 52:11; 53:1–6; 66:7–11, and we find the use of all five senses, sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste (in terms of drinking and eating).⁶⁸ Isaiah's use of sense perception is also associated with knowledge of God, i.e. 'seeing but not knowing,' and 'hearing but not perceiving.' This is significant in the discussion of the unity of Isaiah.

Scholars tend to divide the book of Isaiah into three, First Isaiah (Isa 1–39), the Second or Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 40–55) and Third Isaiah (Isa 56–66).⁶⁹ Nevertheless, there are many scholars using different approaches to argue for the unity of the book of Isaiah.⁷⁰ We need to be careful about the term 'unity' for it can mean the 'thematic and inter-textual unity of the overriding Isaiah tradition'⁷¹ or the literary unity of Isaiah as a whole.⁷² There are some recurring words, phrases and themes which are cited in support of the literary unity of Isaiah. These themes include, but are not limited to, the holiness and the glory of God,⁷³ Zion,⁷⁴ and the blindness and deafness

⁶⁷ R. P. Carroll, "Blindsight and the Vision Thing: Blindness and Insight in the Book of Isaiah," Pages 79–93 in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 80.

⁶⁸ In Isaiah 11:3, we find the use of seeing, hearing and smelling. For the discussion of the verb of smell in Isaiah 11:3, see I. D. Ritchie, "The Nose Knows: Bodily Knowing in Isaiah 11.3," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (2000): 59–73.

⁶⁹ For the relationship between Isaiah 1-39 and 40-66, see R. E. Clements, "Beyond Tradition-History: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah's Themes," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (1985): 95–113.

⁷⁰ C. A. Evans, "On the Unity and Parallel Structure of Isaiah," *Vetus Testamentum* 38 (1988): 129–147; D. M. Carr, "Reaching for Unity in Isaiah," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (1993): 61–80; J. B. Payne, "The Unity of Isaiah: Evidence from Chapters 36-39," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 6 (1963): 50–56; R. J. Clifford, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and Its Cosmogonic Language," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55 (1993): 1–17; R. E. Clements, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah," *Interpretation* 36 (1982): 117–129; Y. T. Radday, "Two Computerized Statistical-Linguistic Tests Concerning the Unity of Isaiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89 (1970): 319–324; W. Brueggemann, "Unity and Dynamic in the Isaiah Tradition," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (1984): 89–107; C. R. Seitz, "Isaiah 1-66: Making Sense of the Whole," Pages 105–126 in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Y. T. Radday, *The Unity of Isaiah in the Light of Statistical Linguistics* (Hildesheim: H. A. Gerstenberg, 1973); R. I. Vasholz, "Isaiah Versus 'the Gods': A Case for Unity," *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (1980): 389–394.

⁷¹ For scholars who took this approach, see Carr, "Unity": 62 n. 3.

⁷² Clements, "Unity": 117; Seitz, "Isaiah," 107.

⁷³ Holiness: Isaiah 1:4; 5:16; 6:3; 8:13; 12:6; 27:13; 30:11; 37:23; 41:14; 43:3; 45:11; 54:5; 57:25; 60:9; 65:5. Glory: Isaiah 2:10; 6:3; 24:15; 42:8; 46:13; 58:8; 60:1; 66:18

⁷⁴ Isaiah 1:8; 3:16; 8:18; 14:32; 18:7; 24:23; 29:8; 31:9; 33:5; 40:9; 46:13; 51:3; 59:20; 62:1; 66:8.

of the Israelites.⁷⁵ The theme of the knowledge of God is also cited in support of the unity of Isaiah. The knowledge of God is introduced as a problem in Isaiah 1:3: Israel does not know God. That lack of knowledge of God then elicits harsh divine judgment (cf. Isa 6:9-10), but also a promise that one day 'the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea' (Isa 11:9). The theme becomes particularly prominent in the trial section (Isa 40–55) where God challenges the world to recognise and acknowledge him (Isa 43:10; 45:3; 49:23; 52:6).

In Isaiah, the knowledge of God is revealed not only to Israel but also to the nations. The name and the deeds of the Lord will be made known among the nations (Isa 12:4–5; cf. 37:20). Also, in Isaiah 19:21, 'The Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians; and the Egyptians will know the Lord on that day, and will worship with sacrifice and burnt offering, and they will make vows to the Lord and perform them.' But more importantly, the knowledge of God will be revealed to the Israelites. They are again reminded that God is the creator and the everlasting God (Isa 40:28; 41:20). They shall know that God is the only true God for 'before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me' (Isa 43:10; cf. Isa 44:8; 45:3–6). The Israelites and all people will know that God is their Saviour, Redeemer and the Mighty One of Jacob, when God punishes the oppressors of Israel (Isa 49:23, 26; 60:16; 66:14).

Sense perception plays a significant role in the discussion of the knowledge of God. Throughout Isaiah, in particular in First Isaiah, the verbs 'see' and 'hear' are frequently used together with 'know' and 'understand'.⁷⁶ The book of Isaiah opens with the spiritual condition of Israel. God calls heaven and earth to listen (שמעו) and to give ear (שהאזיני) to the fact that Israel has rebelled (Isa 1:2); even the ox knows (ידע) its owner, 'but Israel does not know (ידע), my people do not understand (התבונן)' (Isa 1:3). It then follows with the divine perspective on Israel's guilt, and evokes it through sensory distressing imagery (e.g. Isa 1:5–6). God detests the spectacle of sinful Israel appearing before him (Isa 1:12) and declares that he will hide his eyes

⁷⁵ Isaiah 6:9–10; 42:18–20; 43:8–10; 44:18. Clements used the themes of 'blindness and deafness' and 'the divine election of Israel' to support his argument for the theological unity of Isaiah. Clements, "Unity": 117–129.

⁷⁶ K. T. Aitken, "Hearing and Seeing: Metamorphoses of a Motif in Isaiah 1–39," Pages 12–41 in *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings* (eds. P. R. Davies and D. J. A. Clines; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

from them, and he will not listen to their prayers unless they remove their evildoing from before His eyes (Isa 1:15–16). This severing of a face-to-face relationship due to God's disgust at the sight of Israel is the judgment consequent upon their lack of 'knowledge' of God. Not only does God refuse to see or listen to them (1:15-16), but soon in anger he prevents them from seeing or hearing *him* (Isa 6:9-10). Israel refuses to hear God's teachings (Isa 28:12) and thus is constantly exhorted to 'hear the word of God' (Isa 28:14). In Isaiah 30:9, Israel is described as 'children who will not hear the instruction (תורה) of the Lord.' Judah refuses to listen to the teachings of 'seers and prophets' and says to them 'do not see' and 'do not prophesy' (Isa 30:10). The lack of knowledge on the part of Israel is rooted in their refusal to hear the instruction of God.

To show the significance of sense perception in relation to knowledge of God, we select three important themes of Isaiah. They are chosen also because they are particularly relevant to John's Gospel.

6.1. The Motif of Blindness and Deafness

The sin of Israel is the cause of their blindness and deafness. Thus in response to their blindness and deafness, God will execute judgment upon them, but there is still a future hope of the restoration of this spiritual malaise.⁷⁷ The motif of blindness and deafness first appears in Isaiah 6:9–10 and is taken up again in Deutero-Isaiah where the scope of the imagery broadens. There, God's salvation incorporates healing of the physically blind and deaf as well as those who are metaphorically blind and deaf.

The Israelites' lack of knowledge of God is related to their spiritual blindness and deafness, which we find in Isaiah 6:9–10. Before we look into this passage, we should consider its context. At the beginning of Isaiah 6, Isaiah 'saw (ראה) the Lord sitting on a throne' in the temple and Seraphs were attending Him (Isa 6:1–2). Isaiah hears the voice of Seraphs proclaiming the holiness of God (Isa 6:3). He then identifies himself with his people of 'the unclean lips.' In his fear, he affirms the fact

⁷⁷ G. D. Robinson, "The Motif of Deafness and Blindness in Isaiah 6:9-10: A Contextual, Literary, and Theological Analysis," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 8 (1998): 167–186, at 177.

that ‘my eyes (עֵינַי) have seen (רָאוּ) the King, the Lord of hosts’ (Isa 6:5). God removes the sins of Isaiah by touching his mouth with a live coal (Isa 6:6). Once Isaiah is purified, the voice of the Lord calls out, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Isaiah responded, ‘Here am I; send me!’ It is at this point that the message of Isaiah 6:9–10 is given.

This introduction helps us to understand the blindness and deafness in Isaiah 6:9–10. In Isaiah 6:1–6, Isaiah sees God and hears His words. First, he sees God sitting on the throne and does not harden his heart, but recognises that he is a sinner living among the people of unclean lips. Because of his repentant response, his sin is then forgiven. After he sees God, he hears the words of God. Again, rather than being insensitive, he responds immediately to God’s calling.⁷⁸ He is an example of one who sees and hears and understands (יָדַע). We now take a closer look at Isaiah 6:9–10:

‘Go and say to this people: “Keep listening (שָׁמְעוּ שְׁמוּעָה), but do not comprehend (תִּבְיִנוּ); keep looking (וּרְאוּ רֵאיוֹן), but do not understand (יָדְעוּ).” Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes (וְלֹא יִרְאוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם), and listen with their ears (וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם), and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.’

There has been a debate about whether this blindness and deafness is a divine hardening.⁷⁹ Even though later Jewish traditions (e.g. the LXX, the Targum, the Peshitta) try to mitigate the harshness of the Hebrew text and move the responsibility

⁷⁸ G. V. Smith, "Spiritual Blindness, Deafness, and Fatness in Isaiah," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 170 (2013): 166–178, at 172.

⁷⁹ Works discussing the motif of ‘hardening’ in Isaiah is numerous. Just to name a few: C. A. Evans, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6.9–10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989); J. L. McLaughlin, "Their Hearts Were Hardened: The Use of Isaiah 6,9–10 in the Book of Isaiah," *Biblica* 75 (1994): 1–25; D. E. Hartley, "Destined to Disobey? Isaiah 6:10 in John 12:37–41," *Calvin Theological Journal* 44 (2009): 263–287; Robinson, "Deafness"; T. Uhlig, "Too Hard to Understand? The Motif of Hardening in Isaiah," Pages 62–83 in *Interpreting Isaiah* (eds. F. D. G. and H. G. M. Williamson; Leicester: IVP Academic, 2009); T. Uhlig, *The Theme of Hardening in the Book of Isaiah: An Analysis of Communicative Action* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Smith, "Blindness": 166–178; C. A. Evans, "The Text of Isaiah 6: 9–10," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 94 (1982): 415–418. For the divine hardening in the Old Testament, see R. B. Chisholm, Jr., "Divine Hardening in the Old Testament," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (1996): 410–434; E. P. Meadors, *Idolatry and the Hardening of the Heart: A Study in Biblical Theology* (New York: Clark, 2006).

from YHWH to the people,⁸⁰ it is the Lord who promotes this obduracy from the MT text, through the proclamation of the prophet, the purpose being that Israel should receive the final judgment (Isa 6:11–13).⁸¹ What is significant for our study is the role of sense perception in this passage. The senses that used to be a means to mediate the knowledge of God cannot function properly, and this inability to understand and to know is due to the Israelites' obduracy, spiritual impotence and unresponsiveness. In this regard, sense perception is used metaphorically. But are the senses used only metaphorically in this passage? If we take the introduction of Isaiah 6:1–6 into consideration, we may come to a different conclusion.

If we compare Isaiah 6:1–6 and Isaiah 6:9–10, we see the emphasis on the verbs of seeing and hearing.⁸² In contrast to the Israelites who do not know God and thus are given no theophany, Isaiah is granted a vision of God. He sees God sitting on a throne and has a vision of the heavenly court (Isa 6:1–4). His vision of God gives a very powerful sensory insight into the sovereignty of God, the execution of his judgment and the initiation of his deliverance. In the narrative, Isaiah physically sees God and hears God's words. Since Isaiah 6:9–10 follows immediately after Isaiah's vision of God, it is legitimate to see Isaiah as an example of the one who sees, hears and understands. Thus, the seeing and hearing in Isaiah 6:9 may be understood as physical seeing and hearing. Yet the seeing and hearing in verse 10 must be metaphorical, for Isaiah cannot physically blind the eyes and dull the ears of the people. This is how Uhlig understands it. He interprets the imperative verbs in Isa 6:9 as 'literal imperatives,' and he considers the imperatives in Isaiah 6:10 as 'figurative imperatives.'⁸³ We should note that Isaiah never makes it explicit whether he is referring to physical or spiritual blindness and deafness. In Isaiah 6:9–10, it could mean both.

⁸⁰ Evans has shown how later text traditions 'observed a marked tendency to move away from the harsh, telic understanding of the Hebrew text,' where Yahweh himself makes the people's hearts hardened, to 'efforts aimed at mitigating the severity of the Hebrew' and where 'the responsibility is shifted from Yahweh' to the people themselves. Evans, "Isaiah 6: 9–10": 418.

⁸¹ For detailed discussion, see Evans, *Isaiah*, 17–19.

⁸² Uhlig notes the parallel between these two passages. Both are introduced by verbs of sense perception. See Uhlig, "Isaiah," 64.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 68.

This usage of blindness and deafness can be found throughout Isaiah, but two more examples from Isaiah 42:18–20 and Isaiah 44:18 should suffice for our purpose. It is written:

Listen, you that are deaf; and you that are blind, look up and see! Who is blind but my servant, or deaf like my messenger whom I send? Who is blind like my dedicated one, or blind like the servant of the Lord? He sees (רֵאִיתָ) many things, but does not observe (תִּשְׁמַר) them; his ears are open, but he does not hear. (42:18–20)

They do not know, nor do they comprehend; for their eyes are shut, so that they cannot see, and their minds as well, so that they cannot understand (Isa 44:18).

Both passages focus on the fact that the Israelites suffer deafness and blindness, and in Isaiah 44:18, YHWH is the subject who causes this deafness and blindness.⁸⁴ From Isaiah 44:19–20, we know the spiritual blindness and deafness of the people is due to their practice of idolatry.⁸⁵ It is implied that these Israelites who practise idolatry are just like their idols who ‘neither see nor know’ (Isa 44:9). Since the idols cannot see or hear physically, physical seeing and hearing is implied. Yet this blindness and deafness is also to be understood metaphorically because practising idolatry is the consequence of the spiritual blindness and deafness of the people. The physical and spiritual blindness and deafness are interconnected, as one cannot really perceive God’s acts without full possession of all the faculties.

The blindness and deafness of the Israelites is the result of their sin. They have failed to see the deeds and works of God and have failed to hear the law and the commands of God. On the other hand, God foresees their stubbornness and knows that they will not respond to his message, so he sends Isaiah to proclaim a message that promotes their obduracy. It is important that we recognise that YHWH is the

⁸⁴ McLaughlin, "Isaiah": 14.

⁸⁵ Clements, "Beyond Tradition": 102.

cause of the Israelites' blindness and deafness and that the Israelites are also responsible due to their sinful acts and unresponsiveness to God's message.

In the motif of blindness and deafness, we see the emphasis on the knowledge of God, which the Israelites should have retained or regained by seeing God's deeds and works and hearing His law. These sense-perceptible deeds and works of God are the basis of the knowledge of God, yet not everyone can grasp that knowledge because they fail to see the significance of God's mighty works, just as the prophet Isaiah says, 'Keep listening but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.'

6.2. The Motif of Light and Darkness

The blindness and deafness of the Israelites leads to divine judgment. Yet when God's salvation comes, their blindness and deafness will be healed. God's judgment and deliverance are expressed using light and darkness imagery. This is stated explicitly in Isaiah 9:1–2:

The people that were walking in darkness
Shall see a great light;
They that were dwelling in the land of the shadow of death, Light shall
shine upon them.
Thou shalt multiply the rejoicing,

Thou shalt make great the joy;
They shall rejoice before thee as men joy at harvest,
As they rejoice when they divide the spoil.⁸⁶

The darkness refers to the judgment of God upon Israel, who is put into the hands of Assyria (cf. Isa 8:21–22).⁸⁷ The future hope that God will deliver Israel from

⁸⁶ Translation taken from S. A. B. Mercer, "Isaiah 9:1-2," *Anglican Theological Review* 2 (1919): 152–153.

⁸⁷ W. Brueggemann, *Isaiah* (2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 1:82; P. D. Wegner, "What's New in Isaiah 9:1–7," Pages 237–249 in *Interpreting Isaiah* (eds. F. D. G. and H. G. M. Williamson; Leicester: IVP Academic, 2009), 241.

distress and judgment is expressed using light imagery. Light is always linked to the coming of God's glory, which is always described in a visible way.⁸⁸

The light and darkness motif is also linked with the motif of blindness to express the hope of Israel's future restoration, when God will heal the blindness and deafness. This is written in Isaiah 42:16:

I will lead the blind by a road they do not know, by paths they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I will do, and I will not forsake them.

Here the imagery is of physical blindness, but refers to spiritual blindness. Isaiah does not explicitly distinguish between the two. The light imagery refers to God's deliverance, that is, God will rescue the Israelites from the hand of Babylon.⁸⁹ Through the imagery of light and darkness, the judgment and deliverance of God are depicted in a visualisable way. The description 'turning the darkness before them into light' has a strong sensory appeal to readers and hearers.

Divine judgment and deliverance is also closely associated with the motif of Trial. Through the 'trial speeches,' Israel will know why God executes judgment on her.

6.3. The Motif of Trial and Sense perception

The trial motif is a major structural feature of Isaiah and is interwoven with the theme of knowledge, with the motif of blindness and deafness, and with judgment. The book starts with the formula used commonly in the covenantal lawsuit: 'Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth; for the Lord has spoken' (Isa 1:2). This formula invites a third party to support God in his 'legal dispute' with his people.⁹⁰ The reason that God disputes with his people is made clear in Isaiah 1:3: Israel does not know God. The

⁸⁸ Brueggemann, *Isaiah*, 1:82.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:48.

⁹⁰ J. J. M. Roberts, "Form, Syntax, and Redaction in Isaiah 1:2-20," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 3 (1982): 293-306, at 294.

trial motif is most prominent in Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 44–55). There, paradoxically, these same people who are spiritually obtuse (Isa 6:9–10; 42:18, 20) and do now know YHWH are now called to be witnesses (Isaiah 43:8–10), in the case in which God is in a legal dispute with other gods in order to determine who is the true God.⁹¹

Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! Let all the nations gather together, and let the peoples assemble. Who among them declared this, and foretold to us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to justify them, and let them hear and say, "It is true." You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know (תדעו) and believe me and understand that I am he (אני הוה). (Isa 43:8–10)

The fact that they are brought forth as witnesses can mean two things. First, it shows that they still have the essential faculties of witnesses: eyes to see and ears to hear.⁹² Their spiritual deafness and blindness do not negate the fact that they have seen the mighty works of God and have heard the voice of God and hence can be YHWH's witnesses. They have witnessed God's ability to announce historical events before they happen.⁹³ God has spoken through his prophet about things to come and those utterances have been fulfilled in the prophet's day.⁹⁴ The ultimate goal of their testimony is so that they 'may know and believe me and understand that I am he (אני הוה)'.⁹⁵ The acknowledgement of God is His aim in this dispute. Secondly, this passage refers to the future restoration of the Israelites. That these blind and deaf people are now called to be God's witnesses implies that their sight and hearing will be restored, so that they can 'see' the works of God, be God's witnesses and become able to 'hear' the voice of their master, the Lord.⁹⁶ From the context, it is likely that they are brought to testify to what has happened, since this is a 'trial speech.'

⁹¹ Brueggemann, *Isaiah*, 2:56.

⁹² J. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 223.

⁹³ Vasholz, "Isaiah": 390.

⁹⁴ Examples of prophecies fulfilled can be found Isaiah 1–39. For further discussion, see *ibid.*, 392–393. See also Carr, "Unity": 69.

⁹⁵ The reality of God expressed in the formula 'I am he' occurs frequently in Second Isaiah (Isa 41:4; 43:10, 13; 46:4; 48:12; cf. Deut 32:39; John 18:5, 8)

⁹⁶ Robinson, "Deafness": 181.

In God's dispute with Israel, there are several literary techniques that make the scene dramatically vivid, such as the use of first person 'I am' (אני) in Isaiah 41:4; 43:10, 13; 46:4; 48:12; 51:12; 52:6. This invites the reader, as well as the Israelites, into conversation in the presence of God. The verb 'behold' (הנה) is used several times and sometimes with 'I am' (אני). What God invites Israel to see (הנה) is not a theophany, but his powerful actions in creation and in history (Isa 40:10; 42:9; 43:19; 49:22; 51:22; 52:6; 52:13; 54:16; 60:2; 62:11; 65:13; 65:17; 66:15). In Isaiah 62:11, even God's salvation is depicted as visible:

The Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion,
 "See (הנה), your salvation comes; [behold (הנה)] his reward is with him,
 and [behold (הנה)] his recompense before him."

The use of behold (הנה) is a verbal cue to invite readers to imagine. The vivid and sensory image of salvation is also used of the 'servant' figure in 52:13-53:12. The servant at first looks shocking, 'so marred was his appearance' (Isa 52:14). He is not obviously a reflection of the divine glory, for 'he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him' (Isa 53:2), but it is through him that God reveals his glory and power (Isa 52:13). God will intentionally transform this marred humiliated servant into the exalted one.⁹⁷

In the book of Isaiah, we find an emphasis on sense perception in relation to the knowledge of God. The motif of blindness and deafness is used of Israel's lack of knowledge of God. The Israelites have the faculty of seeing and hearing, yet they do not see nor hear. It is emphasised that their spiritual blindness and deafness are because of divine hardening. Yet they are at the same time the consequence of their idolatry, so that just like their idols, they neither see nor hear. Despite their inability to see and to hear, they are called to be God's witnesses. Isaiah emphasises the role of sense perception in attaining the knowledge of God, but he is not straightforward on sense perception. Sometimes he speaks about the physical disability of senses, but sometimes he refers to the spiritual blindness and deafness of the Israelites. He does

⁹⁷ Brueggemann, *Isaiah*, 2:142.

not intend to make a distinction between the two for we need the sense organs to receive God's knowledge, but we also need a spiritual understanding.

7. Conclusion

Our studies show that sense perception is emphasised in the context of testimony, in particular, in the kind of testimony that is related to the knowledge of God. This sense-perceptible divine revelation serves as the basis for John's emphasis on sense perception and testimony. Theophany events show that God reveals himself in a sense-perceptible way, so that the Israelites can know God. God is also made known through sense-perceptible miracles, and the presence and the glory of God are manifested in a visible, physical tabernacle and ark. All of these serve as testimony to God. They testify to God's mighty power and faithfulness. The next generations of Israel are included as eyewitnesses by the statement 'we saw' or 'you have seen.' They are to testify to God's mighty acts even though not all of them are original eyewitnesses. In the Book of Isaiah, the theme of sense perception and knowledge is also significant. The Israelites are rebuked as the ones who suffer blindness and deafness, for they do not have knowledge of God. Despite their having the faculties of the physical senses, they do not see nor hear and, as a result, do not know God. Despite their blindness and deafness, they are called by God as his witnesses for they have witnessed God's power and might through their eyes and ears. We see the emphasis on the physicality of sense perception in attaining knowledge of God, but we also see that the role of sense perception is not always straightforward. God can choose to be made known through the senses, but he can also, and sometimes does, prevent people's senses from perceiving him. His epiphany only sometimes takes the form of direct encounter; often it depends more heavily on manifestation of his presence or acts within the world. This means that to perceive him requires not the physical senses alone, but also spiritual perceptiveness, and this can be blunted through sin as well as through divine hardening.

Chapter 5: Sense Perception and Testimony in the Graeco-Roman World

In the previous chapter, we showed that John inherited the Jewish tradition where revelation or knowledge of God was often expressed in terms of sense perception and testimony and that that seems to have been one source of John's emphasis on the sense-perceptible revelation in Jesus. In this chapter, we explore another possible literary influence on John's emphasis on sense perception and testimony. John lived in the Hellenistic world and wrote in Greek.¹ In the Graeco-Roman cultures across the empire, rhetoric was important in education, politics, the civil service and administration. Even in a writer who was neither exceptionally wealthy nor aristocratic, some rhetorical training or awareness of rhetorical method would be unsurprising. Since John was writing within the Graeco-Roman context, he was likely to have been familiar with the conventions and practices of rhetoric. He may even, as some have argued, have had rhetorical training himself.²

By John's day, juridical training dominated education in rhetoric, and the techniques learned in this system were also used in other patterns of discourse, such as historiography and satire. John's emphasis on testimony, however, makes judicial rhetoric particularly relevant to our study of his gospel. In juridical oratory, techniques of 'bringing before the eyes' of the audience what was being described were an important part of orators' training. The purpose was to make scenes vivid to

¹ Although some scholars claim an Aramaic origin for the Gospel of John, E. C. Colwell's study shows that John's Greek is no different than those who write in Greek. E. C. Colwell, *The Greek of the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Its Aramaisms in the Light of Hellenistic Greek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 130. See further, F. Thielman, "The Style of the Fourth Gospel and Ancient Literary Critical Concepts of Religious Discourse," Pages 169–183 in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. D. F. Watson; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 171–172. For the discussion of Hellenistic influence on John, see V. K. Robbins, "Writing as a Rhetorical Act in Plutarch and the Gospels," Pages 142–168 in *Persuasive Artistry* (ed. D. F. Watson; Sheffield: JSOT Press).

² Cf. Thielman, "Style," 182. There are many scholars who attempt to identify Greek rhetorical convention in John's Gospel by using the methods of rhetorical criticism. For example, Clifton Black analyses the speech of Jesus in Mark 13 and the style of the Farewell Discourse of John 14–17 and shows that there are many features of Graeco-Roman rhetoric in these speeches, C. C. Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice, 2001), 75–94. Kennedy also identifies some rhetorical features in Jesus' Farewell Discourse and thinks that repetitiveness is the most striking rhetorical feature one finds there. G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 73–85.

the audience so as to involve them personally and emotionally. By this, the orators hoped to effect the subjective engagement of their audience in the event as if they were present, rather than eliciting an objective judgment on whether these events really happened.³ Their ultimate aim was to convert their audience into witnesses through triggering their emotions. John's treatment of his theme of testimony is similar to this, for he tries, through rhetorical appeal to vivid, eyewitness testimony and by triggering their emotions, to make his readers into co-witnesses of what happened.

The aim of this chapter is not to apply rhetorical criticism to the Gospel of John nor to classify that Gospel as a specific form of rhetoric.⁴ Rather, its aim is to examine the kind of rhetorical use of ἐνάργεια (vividness) that is likely to have been familiar to John and that plausibly influenced his presentation of Jesus, with its combined emphasis on sense perception and testimony. We focus on the teaching and examples of the rhetorical handbooks, and take case studies from Greek and Roman tradition. This chapter starts with an introduction to the rhetors' techniques of 'bringing before the eyes,' namely ἔκφρασις and ἐνάργεια. It is argued that ἐνάργεια is particularly relevant to John, as it captures the powerfully vivid effect on the audiences. It is shown that ἐνάργεια was valued in judicial rhetoric chiefly for its contribution in making an emotional appeal. The techniques that produce it are systematised, and then Plato's *Apology* and Cicero's *Verrine Orations* are used as examples to show how ἐνάργεια is achieved in practice by the use of these rhetorical techniques to involve the readers personally and emotionally and thus turn them into witnesses of the described events. This discussion will serve as a basis for our analysis of John's use of ἐνάργεια, in his combination of sense perception and testimony.

³ Quintilian claims that 'we shall succeed in making the facts evident, if they are plausible; it will even be legitimate to invent things of the kind that usually occur' (*Inst.* 8.3.70).

⁴ Aristotle divides rhetoric into three classes: deliberative, judicial and epideictic. His first mention of the division of rhetoric into categories is found in *Rhetoric*, 1358b2. For detailed discussion, see E. Garver, "Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric," *Rhetorica* 27 (2009): 1–18; J. Hesik, "Types of Oratory," Pages 145–161 in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric* (ed. E. Gunderson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

1. Techniques in judicial oratory to ‘bring before the eyes’ the thing told: ἔκφρασις and ἐνάργεια⁵

In rhetorical schools, after students had learned to read and write, they would be given the progymnasmata as a preparation for declamation.⁶ Theon’s *Progymnasmata* are the earliest compositional exercises in Greek and were written in the first century A.D., the time period when the earliest books of the New Testament were written. ἔκφρασις (full, detailed description) was one of the exercises practised in progymnasmata under the heading of style.⁷ It appeared in all of the four major Greek rhetorical handbooks.⁸ ἐνάργεια is often mentioned in the discussion of ἔκφρασις and they are closely related for they share the quality of ‘bringing before the eyes.’ But they are not regarded as synonyms by ancient authors. ἐνάργεια is a broader term in rhetoric, while ἔκφρασις is the term for one of the exercises in the progymnasmata. The discussion below ought to give a better understanding of how these two terms are used by ancient authors.

1.1. ἔκφρασις

The definition of ἔκφρασις, as taught in the Greek rhetorical schools of the Roman Empire, is a speech that brings the subject being described vividly before the eyes of the audience.⁹ This definition is very different from that given by modern

⁵ We should note that ἐνάργεια is a very broad and complicated term. It is a term borrowed from philosophy. Although Plato introduced ἐνάργεια into philosophical discussion, it is Epicurus who elaborated the notion of ἐνάργεια and used it as a technical term in epistemological discussion. The importance of Epicurus’ use of ἐνάργεια is due not only to the fact that he was the first to employ ἐνάργεια in his discussion of sense perception, but also because his use of ἐνάργεια served as a basis of the later use of ἐνάργεια in rhetoric and literary criticism. For the use of ἐνάργεια in philosophy, see S. Bussels, *The Animated Image: Roman Theory on Naturalism, Vividness and Divine Power* (München: Akademie Verlag, 2012), 66–71; N. Otto, *Enargeia: Untersuchung zur Charakteristik alexandrinischer Dichtung* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2009), 45–60; K. Ierodiakonou, "The Notion of Enargeia in Hellenistic Philosophy," Pages 60–73 in *Episteme, etc.: Essays in Honour of Jonathan Barnes* (eds. J. Barnes and K. Ierodiakonou; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁶ Progymnasmata means ‘preliminary exercises.’ They were preliminary to the practice of declamation in the rhetorical school. G. A. Kennedy, "Introduction" in *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), x.

⁷ D. A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 30; A. Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 20.

⁸ Hermogenes, *Prog.* 10; Aphthonius *Prog.* 12; Theon, *Prog.* 11; Nicolaus, *Prog.* 12.

⁹ R. Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 1. Or ‘a vividly detailed account of some person, place, time or event which aimed to “bring the subject before the eyes of an audience.”’ See R. Webb, "The Progymnasmata as

literary criticism, which often defines ἔκφρασις in relation to visual art, such as ‘the verbal representation of visual representation’ or ‘words about an image.’¹⁰ Although, in antiquity, ἔκφρασις was linked to visual art or poetry, the focus of this study is on ἔκφρασις as part of rhetorical training.¹¹ There were many possible subjects for ἔκφρασις, such as times (including festivals, events and seasons), places, persons, etc.¹² In antiquity, poets, orators and historians were credited with the ability to ‘place a subject before the audience’s eyes.’¹³ When that was done, imaginative engagement was expected. Successful employment of ἔκφρασις would trigger the reader’s emotions and imagination and thus make him feel as if he were present at the event or were participating in the history.

Theon in his *Progymnasmata* discusses the characteristics of ἔκφρασις, ‘the virtues of ἔκφρασις are the following: above all clarity (σαφήνεια) and vividness (ἐνάργεια), which makes one almost see what is being spoken about (τὰ ἀπαγγελλόμενα)’ (119.31–34).¹⁴ A similar definition is found in Hermogenes. He defines the virtues (ἀρεταί) of ἔκφρασις as ‘clarity (σαφήνεια) and vividness (ἐνάργεια); for the expression should almost create seeing through hearing.’¹⁵ Both these passages show that the most significant characteristic of ἔκφρασις is its appeal to the sense of sight, by which the audience should ‘almost see’; in other words, ἔκφρασις ‘bring[s] all before the eyes.’

Practice," Pages 289–316 in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (ed. Y. L. Too; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 294–295.

¹⁰ S. Bartsch and J. Elsner, "Introduction: Eight Ways of Looking at an Ekphrasis," *Classical Philology* 102 (2007): i–vi.

¹¹ The Shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18 is often used as an example of ekphrastic description.

¹² For examples of composing ἔκφρασις, see Theon, *Prog.* 118–119. English translation taken from Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 45–46.

¹³ The idea of ‘placing before the eyes’ can be traced back to Aristotle’s rhetorical theory, in which he discusses the power of metaphor to place a subject before the eyes (πρὸ ὁμμάτων), Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.11.1–4.

¹⁴ Ἀρεταὶ δὲ ἐκφράσεως αἶδε σαφήνεια μὲν μάλιστα καὶ ἐνάργεια τοῦ σχεδὸν ὁρᾶσθαι τὰ ἀπαγγελλόμενα. The Greek text is taken from A. Theon, *Progymnasmata* (trans. M. Patillon and G. Bolognesi; Paris: Belles Lettres, 1997), 69. English translation is taken from Webb, *Ekphrasis*, 197.

¹⁵ Hermogenes, *Prog.* 10; translation taken from Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 86.

1.2. Ἐνάργεια

Ἐκφρασις and ἐνάργεια share the same quality of ‘bringing the subject before the eyes.’¹⁶ However, there is a distinction between these two terms. If ἔκφρασις refers to a technique which ‘brings all before the eyes’ through detailed description, then ἐνάργεια is the quality of an effective ἔκφρασις.¹⁷ To be more specific, ἔκφρασις is a rhetorical practice which aims for vividness by providing pictorial detailed descriptions, while ἐνάργεια is the rhetorical term that describes the quality of speech which has the ability of ‘bringing before the eyes.’ The term ἐνάργεια is often translated as vividness (in Latin, *evidentia* or *illustratio*).

Ἐνάργεια is much discussed by Greek authors. Homer and Thucydides are often cited in the progymnasmata, since they are capable of turning listeners into ‘spectators’ and have the ability to ‘place before the eyes.’¹⁸ Plutarch credits Thucydides and Xenophon with the ability to make their readers feel as if they are participants at the event they describe by using the technique of ἔκφρασις, where ἐνάργεια is the aim:

Assuredly Thucydides is always striving for this vividness (ἐνάργειαν) in his writing, since it is his desire to make the reader a spectator (ὁρῶντας), as it were, and to produce vividly in the minds of those who peruse his narrative the emotions of amazement and consternation which were experienced by those who behold him...Such a description is characterised by pictorial vividness (γραφικῆς ἐναργείας) both in its arrangement and in its power of description.

(Plutarch, *Mor.* 347A–C; trans. F. H. Babbitt, LCL IV, 501–503)

¹⁶ Ann Vasaly is one of the few authors who uses ἐνάργεια and ἔκφρασις interchangeably. She understands ἐνάργεια as ‘vivid description’ rather than ‘vividness,’ and she defines vivid description or ἐνάργεια as ‘a technique by which an orator created the illusion of sight through the use of a concrete detailed description.’ She later identifies this technique with ἔκφρασις and ἐνάργεια. Vasaly, *Representation*, 19, 20 and 90.

¹⁷ See further discussion of ekphrasis in D. E. Aune, “Ekphrasis,” *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric*: 144.

¹⁸ Webb, *Ekphrasis*, 20.

Xenophon brings it all but before our eyes, and by the vigour of his description (ἐνάργειαν) makes his reader always a participant in the emotions and perils of the struggle, as though it belonged, not to the past, but to the present....

(Plutarch, *Art*, 8.1; trans. Bernadotte Perrin, LCL XI, 143)

Ἐνάργεια is sometimes defined as ‘an expression which brings the object signified under our eyes (λόγος ὅπ’ ὅψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον).’¹⁹ We find the most thorough definition of ἐνάργεια in Dionysius of Halicarnassus when he comments on the rhetorical style of Lysias. According to Dionysius, ‘Vividness (ἐνάργειαν) is a quality which the style of Lysias has in abundance. This consists in a certain power he has of conveying the things he is describing to the senses (αἰσθήσεις) of his audience,²⁰ and it arises out of his grasp of circumstantial detail.’²¹ He claims that his readers should all be able to ‘see [be eyewitnesses of] (ὁρᾶν)²² the actions which are being described going on’ so that they can ‘meet face-to-face the characters in the orator’s story.’²³ In Dionysius’s definition, we find the combination of sense perception and testimony. This shows that appealing to the senses and turning audiences into witnesses are the two important characteristics of ἐνάργεια.

The use of ἐνάργεια is also prominent among Roman orators and can be found in Latin rhetorical handbooks. Cicero’s definition of ἐνάργεια is not much different from the definition one finds in Greek rhetoric. Both emphasise the superiority of sight, to which ἐνάργεια appeals, although they do not exclude other senses. Nonetheless, the appeal to other senses is made clear by Cicero: ‘[F]or it is the sense of sight that is most appealed to, although it is nevertheless possible for the rest of the senses and also most of the mind itself to be affected.’²⁴ Cicero uses the expression

¹⁹ Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.40; trans. Donald Russell, LCL, III, 60, n. 12.

²⁰ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.11.1–3.

²¹ Dionysius, *Lysias* 7; trans. Stephen Usher, 33.

²² Zanker’s understanding of ὁρᾶν as ‘eyewitness’ is a better reading since it is closer to Dionysius’ usage. G. Zanker, “Enargeia in the Ancient Criticism of Poetry,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 124 (1981): 297–311, at 297.

²³ Dionysius, *Lysias* 7.

²⁴ Cicero, *Part. or.* 6.20.

sub aspectum paene subiectio as the equivalent for the Greek concept of rhetorical ἐνάργεια.²⁵ He says in *De oratore*:

For a great impression is made by dwelling on a single point, and also by clear explanation and by putting events almost before the eyes as if they are happening before them (*illustris explanatio rerumque quasi gerantur sub aspectum paene subiectia*)—which are very effective both in stating a case and in illuminating (*ad inlustrandum*) and amplifying (*ad amplificandum*) the statement, with the object of making the fact we amplify appear (*esse videatur*) to the audience (*eis, qui audient*) as important as eloquence is able to make it.

(Ciceor, *De oratore*, 3.53.202, trans. H. Rackham, LCL II, 161)²⁶

Cicero uses *sub aspectum paene subiectio* to refer to the ability to create visual representation, so that the listeners can become spectators as well. Similar statements about the quality of ἐνάργεια can be found in Quintilian. He emphasises the quality of ἐνάργεια as an ornament (*Ornatum*) and says, ‘it is a great virtue to express our subject clearly and in such a way that it seems to be actually seen.’²⁷ He confirms this in *Institutio Oratoria*:

As for what Cicero calls ‘putting something before our eyes (*sub oculos subiectio*),’ this happens when, instead of stating that an event took place, we show how it took place, and that not as a whole, but in detail. In the last book,²⁸ I classified this under *evidentia*.²⁹

²⁵ Cicero uses *evidentia* as the synonym for the philosophical use of ἐνάργεια. See footnote 55. Also, Bussels, *Image*, 71–73.

²⁶ English words in italics are my translation.

²⁷ Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.3.61.

²⁸ Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.3.68.

²⁹ For Latin authors, ἐνάργεια has various translations, such as *demonstratio*, *evidentia*, *illustratio*, *repraesentatio* and *sub oculos subiectio*. Cf. Zanker, “Enargeia”: 298. This indicates the complexity of this term for its meaning is ambiguous. Quintilian (*Inst.* 6.2.32) mentions that Cicero refers to ἐνάργεια as *illustratio* and *evidentia*. Quintilian himself uses the term *evidentia* as a synonym for the Greek ἐνάργεια (*Inst.* 9.2.40). Cicero indeed uses *evidentia* as a synonym for ἐνάργεια (*Academica*, 2.6.17), but it is within the context of philosophical discussion, where ἐνάργεια is used by Zeno as a technical term to refer to something as self-evident which does not require further proof. For further discussion of the philosophical understanding of ἐνάργεια, see J. Annas, “Stoic Epistemology,” Pages 184–203 in *Epistemology* (ed. S. Everson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); M. Frede, “Stoics and Skeptics on Clear and Distinct Impressions,” Pages 65–94 in *The Skeptical Tradition* (ed. M. Burnyeat; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 9.2.40; trans. Donald Russell, LCL IV, 57)

From the ancient *testimonia*, we can see that ἐνάργεια and its Latin equivalents denote the stylistic quality of ‘bringing before the eyes’ which makes a vivid appeal to the senses, to sight in particular.

We have explored the definition of ἐνάργεια and how the ancient authors discuss it. We have also shown that ἐνάργεια appeals to the senses, especially to sight, in order to bring subjects before the eyes of the readers so that those readers feel as if they are participating in the event and are turned into witnesses. It is this particular appeal to sense perception and its relation to testimony that makes a study of ἐνάργεια particularly relevant to John’s Gospel. The next section will show how ἐνάργεια functions as a useful part of persuasion by appeal to emotion.

2. Rhetorical Appeal to Emotion

When ἐνάργεια is used in rhetoric, it has a specific purpose, that is, to bring before the eyes the events described and thereby make listeners into witnesses by working on their emotions. The significance of emotions in persuading an audience was recognised early and consistently in the rhetorical tradition. In Aristotle, pathos, ethos and logos are three different means of proof.³⁰ Demetrius encourages his students to increase emotional impact by narrating events gradually, so ‘in the case of disaster, we should not say what has happened immediately, but keep the reader in suspense and make him share the anxiety of the characters’ (*On Style*, 216). The Roman orator, Quintilian, also acknowledges the Aristotelian concept of pathos and considers emotion to be the force behind eloquence.³¹ A good orator must have the ability to ‘awaken emotions’ and, in order to stir the emotions of others, one needs first to feel those emotions oneself (*Inst.* 6.2.26). Emotional appeal is especially associated with the peroration, but is not limited to that part of the speech:

³⁰ G. A. Kennedy, *Quintilian* (New York: Twayne, 1969), 74.

³¹ *Inst.* 6.2.18. For his discussion on *ethos*, see 6.2.8–17.

The peroration is the most important part of forensic pleading, and in the main consists of appeals to the emotions, concerning which I have consequently been forced to say something...There is scope of an appeal to the emotions, as I have already said, in every portion of a speech. Moreover these emotions present great variety, and demand more than cursory treatment, since it is in their handling that the power of oratory shows itself at its highest.

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 6.2.1–3; trans. H.E. Butler, LCL II, 417)

Quintilian asserts, ‘And yet it is this emotional power that dominates the court, it is this form of eloquence that is the queen of all’ (*Inst.* 6.2.4). Among the techniques for arousing the emotions of an audience, ἐνάργεια plays an important role.³²

In the Latin rhetorical treatises, the emotions most frequently mentioned in connection with ἐνάργεια are pity (*miseratio* or *misericordia*) and indignation (*indignatio*).³³ According to Cicero, when ἐνάργεια is used in a forensic context, its aim is to ‘promote identification with or sympathy for the actors in a scene.’³⁴ Cicero states in *De inventione II*, ‘by a vivid verbal picture, the event is brought before the eyes of the audience (*ante oculos eorum qui audiunt*), so that they will think that they too would have done the same, if they had been confronted with the same situation and the same cause for action at the same time’ (*Inv.* 2.78). In their visualising of the scene, the audience’s emotions would be aroused in favour of the actor and they would become sympathetic to him and would tend to justify his actions. On the other hand, ἐνάργεια could also arouse the indignation of the audience (*Inv.* 2.83) and thus lead them to condemn the actions of the evil-doer.³⁵ When ἐνάργεια was successfully employed, the orator could stir emotion, whether pity or indignation.

³² Vasaly, *Representation*, 20; R. Webb, “Imagination and the Arousal of the Emotions in Greco-Roman Rhetoric,” Pages 112–127 in *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature* (eds. S. M. Braund and C. Gill; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 112.

³³ Webb, “Imagination,” 120. Cf. *Ad Herennium* 4.39.51. Cicero explains how we can arouse indignation and pity respectively in *Inv.* 1.54.104, 107.

³⁴ B. Innocenti, “Towards a Theory of Vivid Description as Practiced in Cicero’s Verrine Oration,” *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 12 (1994): 355–381, at 358.

³⁵ Vasaly, *Representation*, 104. In *The Progymnasmata of Aphthonius*, vivid description is also seen as a ‘persuasive technique.’ Its aim is to arouse indignation. Innocenti, “Cicero”: 362.

The Greek rhetorical treatise *On the Sublime* (1st to 2nd century AD), traditionally attributed to Longinus (a distinguished orator of the early empire) points out the connection between ἐνάργεια and persuasion but argues that there is a fundamental distinction between the use of ἐνάργεια in poetry and the use in rhetoric: the aim of imagination in poetry is ‘to enthrall (ἐκπληξίς),’ while in prose writing it is to ‘present things vividly (ἐνάργεια).’³⁶ The author argues that when the orator combines ‘the power of visualisation,’ which producing ἐνάργεια, with argumentation, the result is persuasion.³⁷ He also illustrates how visualisation (φαντασία) can produce ἐνάργεια:

For the term φαντασία is applied in general to an idea, which enters the mind from any source and engenders speech, but the word has now come to be used predominantly of passages where, inspired by strong emotion, you seem to see what you describe and bring it vividly before the eyes of the audience.

(Longinus, *On the Sublime* 15.1–2; trans. W. H. Fyfe, LCL 23, 171)

This concept is shared by Quintilian. He presents an important concept ‘which the Greeks call φαντάσιαι, and the Romans *visiones*, whereby things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes’ (*Inst.* 6.2.29). Both Quintilian and Longinus view φαντασία as a means to ἐνάργεια. Longinus limits it to oratory, while Quintilian uses it freely also of poetical effects.³⁸ Quintilian shows in Book Six how orators should achieve ἐνάργεια through φαντασία, understood as a kind of visualisation:

The person who will show the greatest power in the expression of emotions will be the person who has properly formed what the Greeks call φαντασίαι (let us call them ‘visions’), by which the images of absent things are presented to the mind in such a way that we seem actually to see them with our eyes and have them physically present to

³⁶ Longinus, *Subl.* 15.2.

³⁷ R. Webb, "Poetry and Rhetoric," Pages 339–369 in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.-A.D. 400* (ed. S. E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 345; M. Krieger, *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 95.

³⁸ Longinus, '*Longinus' on the Sublime* (trans. D. A. Russell; Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 121.

us.

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 6.2.30–31; trans. Donald Russell, LCL III, 60–61)

Quintilian goes further and gives as an example how one would describe a murder scene by using the sense of sight and a detailed description (*Inst.* 6.2.31–32.). He concludes, ‘The result will be ἐνάργεια, what Cicero calls *illustratio* and *evidentia*, a quality which makes us seem not so much to be talking about something as exhibiting it. Emotions will ensure that it is as if we were present at the event itself.’³⁹

Ἐνάργεια also has the ability to amplify evidence and thus contribute to plausibility. In *De partitione oratoria*, Cicero gives examples, ‘the mere indications of an action, for instance a weapon, blood, a cry, a stumble, change of colour, stammering, trembling, or anything else that can be perceived by the senses: also some sign of preparation or of communication with somebody, or something seen or heard or hinted later on.’⁴⁰ The use of ἐνάργεια can bring the events to life before the audience and thus contribute to the credibility of the narration, leading them to believe that these events actually happened.⁴¹ Ἐνάργεια can be used to ‘amplify the narration in order to explain and emphasise important events or circumstances.’⁴²

Quintilian also asserts that the use of ἐνάργεια will give credibility or plausibility to narration for ‘a powerful effect may be created if, to the actual facts of the case, we add a plausible picture of what occurred, such as will make our audience feel as if they were actual eyewitnesses of the scene.’⁴³ However, Quintilian also admits that ‘we shall succeed in making the facts evident, if they are plausible; it will even be legitimate to invent things of the kind that usually occur’ (*Inst.* 8.3.70). For Longinus, it is fine to exaggerate in poetry, but ‘in oratorical imagery the best feature is always its reality and truth’ (*On the Sublime*, 15.8). Whether the events described

³⁹ Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.2.32.

⁴⁰ Cicero, *Part. or.* 11.39.

⁴¹ Vasaly also observes the combination of ἐνάργεια with sense perception in Cicero. She argues that Cicero, who was familiar with Greek theory, both philosophical and rhetorical, ‘might have seen in the technique of *evidentia* a verbal counterpart to the sensory reception of clear and striking images.’ Vasaly, *Representation*, 94.

⁴² Innocenti, “Cicero”: 358.

⁴³ Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.2.123.

ever happened was not the primary concern of Roman rhetors since persuasion was their main aim. The most important function of ἐνάργεια in forensic oratory was to make ‘the audience into virtual witnesses by making them “seem to see” the events described by the speaker’ and then trigger in them ‘the emotions appropriate to the events described.’⁴⁴ In other words, ἐνάργεια encouraged the audience to share the viewpoint of the characters and to empathise with them.⁴⁵ Its aim was to make the audience into witnesses of what the speaker was describing.

The use of ἐνάργεια in Greek and Roman rhetoric is thus very similar. Both Greek and Roman orators aimed to arouse emotion by bringing things vividly before the eyes in order to persuade. By so doing, they turned their audience into eyewitnesses, as if they are participating in the events narrated. However, it is the Roman orators who better expound the use of ἐνάργεια in detail by providing examples of the use of ἐνάργεια in forensic speeches. They also expound how ἐνάργεια fulfills its purpose of persuasion by amplifying evidence and thus contributing to plausibility. In that way, ἐνάργεια encourages the audience to share the viewpoint of the characters and to empathise with them. There are more ways than one of achieving ἐνάργεια and it may be helpful to classify the different methods by looking at various rhetorical treatises. This will then serve as a foundation for identifying John’s use of ἐνάργεια in his presentation of Jesus.

3. Ways to achieve ἐνάργεια

Many ancient authors mention ἐνάργεια in their writings, but only a few actually speak about how to achieve ἐνάργεια and provide examples. Their discussions provide an important basis for later readers to identify the use of ἐνάργεια in a piece of writing, and to analyse the techniques for achieving it.

In his *On Style*, Demetrius discussed ways of achieving ἐνάργεια, but he never defined the term ἐνάργεια explicitly. He must have assumed that this concept was

⁴⁴ Webb, *Ekphrasis*, 90, 122.

⁴⁵ For the discussion of emotion, see D. S. Levene, "Pity, Fear and the Historical Audience: Tacitus on the Fall of Vitellius," Pages 128–149 in *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature* (eds. S. M. Braund and C. Gill; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.1.312; 6.2.29–36; *Ad Herennium* 4.55.68.

well-known to his readers.⁴⁶ According to Demetrius, there are several ways to achieve ἐνάργεια. The first is to give an exact narration by providing detail and cutting out nothing (*On Style*, 209–210). He uses a Homeric simile (Homer, *Il.* 21.257) as an example to illustrate his point. Demetrius explains that ‘the comparison owes its vividness to the fact that all the accompanying circumstances are mentioned and nothing is omitted’ (*On Style*, 209).⁴⁷ The passage about the horse race in honour of Patroclus (Homer, *Il.* 23.379–381) is used as another example of omitting none of the details in order to achieve vividness.⁴⁸ There Homer uses many action verbs, such as ‘hug,’ ‘haul,’ ‘lean,’ ‘whip,’ ‘shout,’ and ‘slacken.’ These action verbs help readers to create a vivid picture of riding in a horse race.

Repetition is the second device that achieves ἐνάργεια, according to Demetrius. He stated that ‘repetition (διλογία) often gives the effect of vividness (ἐνάργειαν) more than a single statement’ (*On Style*, 211). He also gives an example: ‘You are the man who, when he was alive, spoke to his discredit, and now that he is dead write to his discredit’ (*On Style*, 211). The repeated use of the words ‘to his discredit,’ according to Demetrius, ‘adds to the vividness (ἐναργεστέρων) of the invective.’⁴⁹ Repetition not only achieves vividness but also increases the emotional impact (*On Style*, 214).

The third way to achieve ἐνάργεια is to create climax by narrating events gradually to increase the emotional impact; so in the case of disaster, we should not say what has happened immediately, but ‘keep the reader in suspense and make him share the anxiety of the characters’ (*On Style*, 216).⁵⁰

The fourth technique in ἐνάργεια is to describe the ‘circumstances of any action’ (*On Style*, 217). The first example Demetrius gives is a description of countryman’s walk: ‘the noise of his feet had been heard from afar as he approached’

⁴⁶ Bussels, *Image*, 74.

⁴⁷ Unless otherwise specified, all translation of Demetrius’ *On Style* is taken from W. R. Roberts, *On Style: The Greek Text of Demetrius De Elocutione* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902).

⁴⁸ Grube argues that it is Homer’s selection of ‘precise and vivid details rather than omission of none’ that attains vividness in this passage. G. M. A. Grube, *A Greek Critic: Demetrius on Style* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 109 n. 210.

⁴⁹ For more examples of using repetition to achieve ἐνάργεια, see Demetrius, *On Style*, 213–214.

⁵⁰ Grube, *Demetrius*, 110.

(217). This suggests that he is walking heavily. Another example is where Plato says of Hippocrates, ‘He was blushing, for the first glimmer of dawn now came to betray him.’ The vividness of this description is ‘the result of the care shown in the narrative, which brings to mind the fact that it was night when Hippocrates visited Socrates’ (218). Finally, the use of harsh sounds and ‘onomatopoeic words’ produces ἐνάργεια for ‘every imitation (μίμησις) [of sound] is vivid to some extent (219–210).’⁵¹ Demetrius’ discussion provides a basis as to how the ancient authors spotted the use of ἐνάργεια in a piece of writing. We shall now turn to Roman rhetoric and see how Roman rhetors discussed ἐνάργεια.

Among the rhetorical and literary-critical treatises from the Roman imperial period, Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* gives the most thorough discussion of ἐνάργεια compared to other writings. In his discussion of ornament he enumerates ways of achieving ἐνάργεια. The first is to create a pictorial image by noting particular features of actions and objects rather than describing the actions and objects (*Inst.* 8.3.63). Quintilian uses a passage from the *Verrines* as an example: ‘There stood the Roman praetor, in his slippers, with a purple cloak and a tunic down to his heels, leaning on one of his women on the beach...’ (*Verr.* II. 5.86). Quintilian expects everyone who reads this passage to be able to imagine ‘the face, the eyes, the disgusting endearments of the pair, and the silent loathing and abashed fear of the bystanders’ in their mind as if they could see this scene (*Inst.* 8.3.64–65). Quintilian does not explain how to paint a whole scene in words but, from the context, it seems that it is done by providing details of features and the actions of the subject, rather than using adjectives to describe the subject.

Quintilian states that the second device that can be used to obtain ἐνάργεια is providing details. He argues that instead of saying ‘the city was stormed,’ one should expand everything by adding details such as ‘flames racing through houses and temples, the crash of falling roofs, the single sound made up of many cries, the blind flight of some, others clinging to their dear ones in a last embrace, shrieks of children and women, the old men whom an unkind fate has allowed to live to see this day...’

⁵¹ Examples are taken from *Odyssey* 9.289 and *Iliad* 23.116.

(*Inst.* 8.3.67–69). It is notable that in these detailed descriptions, there is use of several sensory images are used, such as sound, embrace, shrieks, and sight.

The third device that Quintilian identifies is ‘describing the incidental features of a situation.’ He argues that the easiest way to achieve that is to ‘watch Nature and follow her. All eloquence is about the activities of life, every man applies whatever he hears to his own experience, and the mind finds it easiest to accept what it can recognise’ (*Inst.* 8.3.71–72). Unfortunately, he does not provide enough examples to allow us to be sure of what he means by watching Nature and following her. From what we already know, we may surmise that that what he means is include details and processes or reactions which would be natural in the situation described.

Although Cicero is often quoted by Quintilian as an example of one who applies ἐνάργεια abundantly in his writings, Cicero does not discuss the concept of ἐνάργεια systematically. It is probable that he assumes that his readers are familiar with the concept. Cicero argues that ἐνάργεια can be obtained by metaphor and amplification. He says:

The style is *inlustris* if the words employed are chosen for their dignity and used metaphorically (*translata*) and in exaggeration and adjectivally and in duplication and synonymously and in harmony with the actual action and the representation (*imitatione*) of the facts. For it is this department of oratory which almost sets the fact before the eyes (*paene ante oculos*)—for it is the sense of sight that is most appealed to, although it is nevertheless possible for the rest of the senses and also most of the mind itself to be affected.

(Cicero, *De partitione oratoria* 6.20, trans. H. Rackham, LCL2, 327)⁵²

It seems that for Cicero, metaphor and amplification are ways to ‘set the fact before the eyes (*paene ante oculos*).’ The *inlustris* style makes us feel that we actually see it before our eyes (*vero ut videre videamur*) (Cicero, *De part. or.* 6.21). But Cicero does not discuss in detail how to achieve ἐνάργεια. It is only through analysing

⁵² See also Cicero, *Part. or.* 15.53.

his writings that we can generate an appreciation of his use of ἐνάργεια.⁵³ It may be observed, for example, that Cicero seems to promote visualisation by particularising actions with objects and noting that ‘actions occur suddenly (*repente*),’⁵⁴ such as ‘the locks were being wrenched off and the doors burst open’ (*Verr. II. 4.52*). The description of the sudden, violent actions creates vividness for his readers. This is often used by Cicero together with contrast to enhance the vividness. For example, Cicero contrasts the scene before and after Verres’ corrupt activities. He says, ‘The fields and the hill-sides that I had once seen (*vidissem*) green and flourishing I now saw (*videbam*) devastated and deserted...’ (*Verr. II, 3.18.47*). Cicero also uses verbal cues, such as ‘before my eyes’ (*Verr. II. 4.50.110*) to tell his audience that he is visualising a real memory and implies the presence of crowds of witnesses, as when he mentions the market place, to create vividness and enhance credibility (*Verr. II. 4.29.67*).⁵⁵

From the discussion above, we can summarise the several ways of achieving ἐνάργεια. Most of these methods appeal to the senses. For example, in Demetrius’ example of the countryman, ‘the noise’ and the sensory verb ‘heard’ are used to enhance vividness. In Quintilian’s examples, he uses words such as ‘sound,’ ‘cries,’ ‘shriek,’ ‘clinging,’ and ‘see.’ He emphasises the creating of a pictorial image by appealing to the senses. For Cicero, metaphor and amplification also operate through sense perception to achieve vividness. Even though sense perception is not explicitly mentioned in relation to some of the methods, it is implied that the orators must have mental images in their minds before they can describe them. Even though appeals to the senses are not the only way to achieve ἐνάργεια, the survey shows that sense perception plays a significant role. A summary of the ways to achieve ἐνάργεια is as follows:

1. Using exact narration by providing details and cutting out nothing (Demetrius)

⁵³ Innocenti analyses Cicero’s *Verinne Orations* and identifies several features of ἐνάργεια that Cicero used to promote visualisation. I am indebted to his discussion. Innocenti, “Cicero”: 374–381.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁵⁵ According to Innocenti, ‘A cue to imagine can take at least two forms: instructing auditors to imagine or telling auditors that the speaker is imagining.’ *ibid.*, 374.

2. Repetition (Demetrius)⁵⁶
3. Creating a climactic effect by narrating events gradually to increase the final emotional impact (Demetrius)
4. Describing the circumstances of any action (Demetrius)
5. Creating a pictorial image by noting particular features of actions and objects rather than describing the actions and objects (Quintilian)
6. Describing the incidental features of a situation (Quintilian)
7. Providing details to create a pictorial image (Quintilian)
8. Describing sudden actions or contrast (Cicero)
9. Using verbal cues to prompt the imagination (Cicero)
10. Mentioning the presence of a crowd (Cicero)
11. Metaphor (Cicero)
12. Amplification (Cicero)

To show how these techniques are practised to achieve ἐνάργεια, we examine two texts from Plato and Cicero respectively as examples, but we note that Plato or Cicero can sometimes apply more than one method in the same passage and may not use other methods at all. Also, some methods, such as method 5, 6 and 7 above may not be wholly clear-cut or separable. When describing situations (method 6), one might be at the same time be describing actions and objects (method 5). Methods 6 and 7 both aim to create pictorial images. While method 6 emphasises the particular

⁵⁶ Quintilian also thinks that repetition has the effect of bring things before eyes. He says, ‘The repetition [*repetitio*] and grouping of the facts, serves both to refresh the memory [*memoriam*] of the judge and to place the whole of the case before his eyes, and, even although the facts may have made little impression on him in detail, their cumulative effect is considerable’ (*Inst.* 6.1.1).

features of a situation, method 7 emphasises details. But, sometimes, both details and particular features of situations are used. Also, when describing particular actions, objects, or situations, a pictorial image is often created. Thus, we must allow some flexibility when identifying each method for it seems that, in practice, these authors did not make a clear distinction between each method. After all, their ultimate aim was to achieve ἐνάργεια.

Since sense perception is significant in achieving ἐνάργεια, the texts cited from Plato and Cicero are passages where sense perception is prominent.

4. An Analysis of Plato's *Apology* and Cicero's *Verrine Orations*

4.1. Plato's *Apology*

Plato's *Apology* was regarded in antiquity as forensic oratory and remains so regarded by modern scholarship.⁵⁷ It records the trial of Socrates, who was charged with impiety and corruption of the Athenian youth (24c).⁵⁸ Socrates states that he does not try to persuade in his accusers' fashion (17b). Rather, he persuades by telling the truth. Even though to persuade the jury of his innocence is the purpose of his speech, Socrates refuses 'to implore the judge or to get acquitted by begging' but instead tries to teach and persuade (35c). Therefore, in his defence, he does not use stylised or polished language or begging for favours but appeals to truth and to the law.⁵⁹ He does, however, appeal through the persuasive power of the language of sense perception, as our discussion shows. In this section, we demonstrate how Plato applies the methods discussed above to achieve ἐνάργεια in his presentation of Socrates' trial.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ T. C. Brickhouse and N. D. Smith, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and the Trial of Socrates* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 70. E. Strycker, *Plato's Apology of Socrates: A Literary and Philosophical Study with a Running Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 8. Scholars debate as to whether the speech of Socrates is fiction or not. However, this is a difficult question to answer and since no further evidence is provided, this issue will not be discussed here. D. Leibowitz, *The Ironic Defense of Socrates Plato's Apology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 6. For discussion on the historicity of the Platonic Apology, see Strycker, *Apology*, 1–8.

⁵⁸ Cf. Diogenes, who remarks that he is 'guilty of refusing to recognise the gods recognised by the state, and of introducing other new divinities' (*Diogenes, Lives I*, 2.40).

⁵⁹ Socrates believes that the virtue of an orator is to speak the truth (*Apol.* 18a) and that the law must be obeyed (*Apol.* 19a).

⁶⁰ Plato does not use the term ἐνάργεια in his *Apology*. But this term can be found in his other

4.1.1. Repetition and the Presence of the Crowd

In the following passages, we see the repetition of the verb ἀκούω. This repetition is used together with the presence of the crowd to create ἐνάργεια and thereby enhance the credibility and plausibility of the scene. By doing that, Plato sets before the readers something that real eyes have seen and real ears have heard and can recall to memory.

To understand how Plato achieves ἐνάργεια, it is best to begin with the verbs of sense perception used because most of the methods mentioned above appeal to the senses. In his *Apology*, the most frequent verb of sense perception used is ἀκούω.⁶¹ At the very beginning of Socrates' defence, the verb ἀκούω appears several times. Socrates assures his jury that they will hear only truth from him.⁶² He continues:

And, men of Athens, I urgently beg and beseech you, if you hear (ἀκούσεσθε) me making my defence with the same words with which I have been accustomed to speak both in the market place at the bankers' tables, where many of you have heard (ἀκούητε) me, and elsewhere, not to be surprised or to make a disturbance on this account.
(Plato, *Apology*, 17c; trans. Harold North Fowler, LCL I, 71)

We note the use of ἐνάργεια in this passage in the verb ἀκούω and the mention of 'market place at the bankers' tables.' Plato has Socrates emphasise that the words they will hear will be the same words he has been 'accustomed to speak in the market place.' By hearing this, his audience can call up a picture or recall their memory of

writings. In Plato's *Statesman*, Socrates uses the noun ἐνάργεια once to refer to visual clarity, 'but not yet to have received clearness (ἐνάργειαν) that comes from pigments and the blending of colours.' Plato, *Pol.* 277c. The adjective is found in *Phaedr.* 83c, where it refers to 'the immediacy and trustworthiness attributed in orthodox thinking to senses like sight.' In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates uses ἐναργής to 'describe words that are capable of implanting themselves and like healthy seeds, coming to life in students' minds' (*Phaedr.* 278a). Translation taken from D. S. Allen, *Why Plato Wrote* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 58. Plato's and Socrates' concept of ἐνάργεια appeals to sight or visual clarity. In this regard, their understanding of ἐνάργεια is no different from the definition of ἐνάργεια one finds in the later rhetorical handbooks. However, ἐνάργεια is not restricted to the sense of sight. It appeals to the sense of hearing as well. Zanker, "Enargeia": 298.

⁶¹ It occurs 27 times. Most of them are used in the first speech. Only three of them are used after the verdict is pronounced.

⁶² 'But you shall hear from me nothing but the truth (ὅμειξ δέ μου ἀκούσεσθε πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν). Socrates, or Plato, insists that 'speaking the truth' is what makes an orator. This is shown by his repetition of the words for truth (ἀληθές, ἀλήθεια). Plato, *Apol.* 17b.

Socrates and picture the way in which he spoke in the market place at the bankers' tables, as if they were there, or there again, listening to Socrates' conversation. This is the effect that ἐνάργεια is intended to have.⁶³

4.1.2. Repetition, Contrast and Creating a Pictorial Image by Noting Particular Features of Actions and Objects

After his opening address,⁶⁴ Socrates vividly describes how his first accusers have been engaging in slanderous talk about him, by quoting them: 'There is a certain Socrates, a wise man, a ponderer over the things in the air and one who has investigated the things beneath the earth and who makes the weaker argument the stronger' (18b). He points out how his accusers have spread this false report against him and how the jury may have been influenced by them 'for those who hear (ἀκούοντες) them think that men who investigate these matters do not even believe in gods' (18c). Because the jury have heard (ἤκούσατε) them accusing Socrates earlier and much more, he first has to speak in his defence against them (18e). Socrates evokes in the audience's imagination the scene so that they can picture how his accusers have been walking around spreading false accusations against him and so that they will feel sympathetic towards him. In order to convince the jury of his innocence, he first has to convince them that the accusations against him are not true.⁶⁵

Socrates then continues to defend himself against the popular caricature of him in a play by Aristophanes.⁶⁶ He says:

⁶³ Repetition of sensory verbs and the presence of crowd are also used by John to enhance vividness. For example, in the narrative of feeding the five thousand and of healing the blind man, the verb, 'to see' is repeated several times and the phrase 'the presence of the crowd' is also used to enhance the vividness. See further in Chapter 6, section 1.4 and section 1.5.

⁶⁴ Reeve divides the *Apology* into the following sections: the opening address (17a1–18a6), the prosthesis (18a7–19a7), the defence proper, which consists of the defence against the popular caricature (19a8–24b2) and the defence against the formal charges brought by Meletus (24b2–28a1), the digression (28a2–34b5), the epilogue (34b6–35d8), the counter penalty (35e1–38b9) and lastly, a closing address (38c1–42a5). C. D. C. Reeve, *Socrates in the Apology: An Essay on Plato's Apology of Socrates* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), 3. This is quite close to Burnet and Strycker; see Strycker, *Apology*, 22–25.

⁶⁵ Brickhouse and Smith, *Socrates*, 85.

⁶⁶ Aristophanes is the ancient Greek comic playwright who wrote a play, *The Clouds*, concerning a pseudo-intellectual named Socrates. Ibid., 86.

For you yourselves saw (ἐωρᾶτε) these things in Aristophanes' comedy, a Socrates being carried about there, proclaiming that he was treading on air and uttering a vast deal of other nonsense, about which I know nothing, either much or little. (19c)

And I offer as witnesses most of yourselves, and I ask you to inform one another and to tell, all those of you who ever heard (ἀκηκόατε) me conversing – and there are many such among you – now tell, if anyone ever heard (ἤκουσε) me talking much or little about such matters. And from this you will perceive that such are also the other things that the multitude says about me. But in fact none of these things are true, and if you have heard (ἀκηκόατε) from anyone that I undertake to teach people and that I make money by it, that is not true either.

(Plato, *Apology*, 19d; trans. Harold North Fowler, LCL I, 75–77)

In this passage, Socrates reminds the jury about the play they have seen, using vivid terms, ‘treading on air’ and ‘uttering a vast deal of other nonsense.’ For those who had never seen the play, they could also picture how Socrates was misrepresented in the play. Socrates asserts that the way in which the play portrayed him was false. He was not involved in these matters.⁶⁷ He denies that he is a natural philosopher as the play portrayed him to be.⁶⁸ To make his points persuasive, he contrasts what is represented in the play with reality. He asks the jury to be his witnesses, since many of them have heard him conversing and can testify that these things are not true. He insists that if anyone says that he has heard him talking about such matters or teaching people to make money, then that is not true either.

For the audience present at the trial, the use of verbs of sense perception will evoke their memories of what they saw in the play and what they heard in the market place. As they listen to Socrates’ defence, they will have a vivid picture in their minds about Socrates’ conversation with others. By evoking that memory through ἐνάργεια, Socrates is hoping that the jury will remember or imagine the conversations and then

⁶⁷ T. G. West, *Plato's Apology of Socrates: An Interpretation, with a New Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 92.

⁶⁸ Strycker, *Apology*, 55.

compare that to what they saw in the play or heard in the first accusation made against him. Socrates makes a connection between past and present through sense perception. By using the language of sense perception and testimony, Socrates hopes to make his audiences into his witnesses for him through the effect of ἐνάργεια.⁶⁹

4.1.3. Verbal Cues to Prompt Imagination

In *Apology* 20d, Socrates says, ‘I will try to show (ἀποδείξαι) you what it is that has brought about my reputation and aroused the prejudice against me. So listen. And perhaps I shall seem to some of you to be joking; be assured, however, I shall speak perfect truth to you.’ Note the use of ‘show’ for this implies that he will not only explain but ‘will show before the jury’s and (audience’s) eyes what has caused all the trouble: he will reenact his “crime.”’⁷⁰ However, he is not sure about how successful this demonstration will be. Therefore, he says, I will ‘try.’ His demonstration consists of telling them the origin of the slander: the oracle of Delphi.⁷¹ He asks his jury to listen and not to make a disturbance (20e). The language of sense perception brings the subject of his speech vividly to life in the eyes of his readers’ minds by triggering their imaginations. As they listen to Socrates, even though they were not there when Socrates heard the oracle, they can picture the scene as if they had been.

4.1.4. Repetition with a Description of Sudden Actions

So far we have seen how Socrates’ or Plato’s use of verbs of sense perception is intended to persuade the listeners or readers by evoking memories, so that they may become sympathetic to his position. Up to this point, the audience we refer to is made

⁶⁹ Socrates uses contrast to enhance vividness. He contrasts what was told about him in the play with what people heard him speaking in real life. Thus there are two perspectives on him. The jury has been strongly influenced by the play and were drawn in by its vivid portrayal. Socrates seeks to counteract that by triggering their memory of him, so that they can have a more vivid picture of him speaking in real life. By contrasting this with the play, he thereby seeks to show that the play’s portrayal was foolish and to undermine its effect on the audience. There are some similarities in John, although the situation is quite different. In John, there are also two different perspectives on Jesus: those who believe and those who do not. John uses ἐνάργεια to enhance the vividness of the perspective of those who do believe, for this is also the perspective through which the narrative is told. See Chapter 7, section 1.4, 1.5 and Chapter 8, 2.1.1.

⁷⁰ Leibowitz, *Defense*, 62.

⁷¹ Leibowitz (*Defense*, 66) thinks that Socrates invented the story of the oracle. However, it would be unreasonable for Socrates to make up a story to defend himself.

up of the people present at the trial, namely the dramatic audience.⁷² As for the literary audience, as they read the speech, they also, through sense perception, can have a vivid picture of Socrates' defence of himself. The following passage may not have been vivid for the audience present at the trial but, for later readers, it will certainly help them to picture the scene at the trial as if they were there. It is recorded in *Apology*, 30c.

In this passage, we again see the repetition of the verb ἀκούω but, this time, it is combined with the method of describing the particular circumstances of sudden actions.

Do not make a disturbance, men of Athens; continue to do what I asked of you, not to interrupt my speech by disturbances, but to hear me; and I believe you will profit by hearing. Now I am going to say some things to you at which you will perhaps cry out; but do not do so by any means.

(Plato, *Apology*, 30c; trans. Harold North Fowler, LCL I, 111)

Socrates asks his audience not to make a disturbance,⁷³ but to hear him for he will say some things that they will perhaps cry out about. There are several key words that help to effect ἐνάρπγεια: disturbance, hear and cry out. All these words involve our senses, especially the sense of hearing. By using these words, Plato makes the trial scene appear vivid in the minds of his readers, as if they were there seeing and hearing the shouting and disturbance of the audience while Socrates is trying to calm them down by asking them to hear him.⁷⁴

⁷² Since there are two audiences, the jury present at the trial and the literary audience, the readers of Plato's defence of Socrates, it is necessary to consider the effect of the language of sense perception on each of them. Cf. West, *Apology*, 76.

⁷³ 'It is Athenian custom to give their approval or disapproval of a speaker by applause, shouts of anger or jeers.' *ibid.*, 51, n. 9. However, those people who were present at the court to hear the trial might also make the disturbance. Brickhouse and Smith, *Socrates*, 75.

⁷⁴ The disturbance is caused by Socrates' audience, which results in disruption of his speech. This sudden action can be comparable to what we find in the sign narratives in John. In John, all of Jesus' signs involve sudden actions, but John draws attention to particular moments where the expected course of things is suddenly disrupted. For example, in the story of raising Lazarus, there are many disruptions before Jesus actually brings Lazarus alive (see Chapter 7, section 1.6). Another similarity between this passage and John's Gospel is the emphasis on noise and emotions. In the narrative of cleansing the temple (John 2:12-25), John describes Jesus' particular actions, i.e. he 'drives' the animals and moneychangers out of the temple, 'pours out' the coins and 'overturns' the tables to create

After his defence against Meletus' charge, Socrates explains the reason why he always gives advice to people in private⁷⁵ rather than taking a public political post and speaking in public lectures. He has to convince the jury that he cares about their well-being although he never speaks publicly. The reason he gives is that a divine voice warned him not to go into politics.⁷⁶

Perhaps it may seem strange that I go about and interfere in other people's affairs to give this advice in private, but do not venture to come before your assembly and advise the state. But the reason for this, as you have heard me say [31d] at many times and places, is that something divine (δαιμόνιον)⁷⁷ and spiritual comes to me, the very thing which Meletus ridiculed in his indictment. I have had this from my childhood; it is a sort of voice (φωνή)⁷⁸ that comes to me, and when it comes it always holds me back from what I am thinking of doing, but never urges me forward. This it is which opposes my engaging in politics.

(Plato, *Apology*, 30c–d; trans. Harold North Fowler, LCL I, 111–113)

According to this passage, Socrates has mentioned this divine voice several times in different places and many people have heard him. Therefore these people are his eyewitnesses. Elsewhere in the *Apology*, he refers to this 'voice' again by calling it μαντική ἢ τοῦ δαιμονίου. This voice came and warned him not to do something.⁷⁹

vividness. Through the effect of ἐνάργεια, the readers can feel Jesus' anger and imagine the disturbance and the noise that was caused by Jesus' action. See Chapter 7, section 2.2.

⁷⁵ 'But I am always busy in your interest, coming to each one of you individually like a father or an elder brother and urging you to care for virtue' (*Apol.* 31b).

⁷⁶ Some scholars worry that this statement does not fit Socrates' image as 'a model of the life of reason,' so they try to understand this voice as 'the voice of conscience or moral intuition.' However, Brickhouse refutes this view. Brickhouse and Smith, *Socrates*, 141–148.

⁷⁷ West does not translate φωνή and, in his interpretation of this passage, he does not regard this divine voice as a voice from a divinity. For his interpretation of *daimonion*, see West, *Apology*, 181–191. On the other hand, Brickhouse argues, for Socrates, this divine voice is a 'sign from the god.' Brickhouse and Smith, *Socrates*, 139–148. This view is shared by Strycker, *Apology*, 154. It is likely that Socrates believes that this divine voice is indeed a sign from God; otherwise, Meletus would not have ridiculed this in his indictment.

⁷⁸ This word is used only three times in the *Apology*. The first use occurs in 17d where it is usually translated as 'dialect.'

⁷⁹ Socrates mentions this divine sign quite often, see *Phaedr.* 242b–c; *Euthyd.* 272e3–4; *Theaet.* 151a2–5; *Resp.* 6.496c. For discussion of these passages and Socrates' divine sign, see Strycker, *Apology*, 153–155.

One of the things the voice has warned him not to do is to engage in politics. The use of ‘voice’ involves the sense of hearing and makes this divine thing vividly real to the audience. By using the repetition ‘voice’ and description of the ‘coming of the voice,’ Socrates makes his description vivid to his audience, who get a picture of the voice ‘coming’ to Socrates.

After Socrates’ first speech, the jury reaches a verdict and convicts him.⁸⁰ Does it mean that Socrates’ speech has not been persuasive? Socrates certainly rejects this view. Even after he has been convicted, he still believes that his speech was persuasive.⁸¹ He states in his last speech that the reason he has lost his case is because he was not willing to say things to the jury that they would have been most pleased to hear.⁸² In fact, his speech can be considered to have been persuasive since, if only thirty of those who voted against him had voted for him (36a), he would have won the case.⁸³ His speech turned out to be more persuasive than he expected for, as he had observed in the beginning, it is difficult to remove prejudice from the jury (19a).⁸⁴ This result suggests that his use of ἐνάργεια had some effect. We now turn to examples from Cicero’s text.

4.2. Cicero’s *Verrine Orations*.

In the previous sections, we have explored the use of ἐνάργεια in Graeco-Roman rhetoric and its use in Plato’s *Apology* as an example to demonstrate the use of ἐνάργεια in a juridical context. The study has shown that ἐνάργεια is used extensively as a rhetorical device in Greek literary texts. In this section, we turn our attention to Latin literature. From Cicero’s extensive writings, I have chosen his *Verrine Orations* because we find there an appeal to sense perception and emotions. For example, in *Verr. 2.5.158–68*, Cicero depicts the scene of the flogging and crucifixion of Publius Gavius by using several verbs of sense perception to trigger emotion. Craig describes

⁸⁰ *Apol.* 36a

⁸¹ *Apol.* 38d.

⁸² *Apol.* 38e.

⁸³ Brickhouse also thinks that his speech is quite effective. Brickhouse and Smith, *Socrates*, 158–159. According to Diogenes Laertius, Socrates was convicted by ‘two hundred and eighty-one votes more than those for acquittal.’ *Diogenes, Lives I*, 2.41. Scholars regard this number as incorrect, for it is believed that the jury was of an even number. It is believed that the number of the jury is five hundred. Brickhouse and Smith, *Socrates*, 76; Strycker, *Apology*, 10.

⁸⁴ West, *Apology*, 209.

this description as ‘the culminating emotional moment.’⁸⁵ Quintilian, when speaking about ἐνάργεια, also cites Cicero’s *Verrine Orations* (*Verr.* 2.5.86) as an illustration, showing how the orator aimed to produce a vivid and detailed picture in the minds of the audience (Quintilian. *Inst.* 8.2; 8.3.61–71).⁸⁶ The study of the primary source ought to give us fuller insight into how ἐνάργεια is applied in forensic speeches in Roman rhetoric. Our focus is on the passages where Cicero appeals to sense perception to achieve ἐνάργεια in order to work on the emotions of his audience. As in Plato’s *Apology*, Cicero sometimes uses a single method, and sometimes combines different methods.

4.2.1. Using Dialogues, Contrast and Creating a Pictorial Image by Noting Particular Features of Actions and Objects

In *In Verrem actio prima*, Cicero depicts a scene in which Verres is greeted by Gaius Curio by using direct speech. When Hortensius sees Verres, he says to him, ‘I hereby inform you, that to-day’s election means your acquittal.’ This conversation is then overheard by others.⁸⁷ In this passage, we also see that he applies the technique of describing the incidental features of a situation and uses contrast to make his scene vivid.

Just near the Arch of Fabius, he [Gaius Curio] noted Verres among the crowd, called out (*appellat*) to him, and congratulated him loudly (*voce maxima gratulatur*). He said not a word to the newly-elected consul Hortensius himself, nor to the relatives and friends of Hortensius who were there at the time. No, it was Verres with whom he stopped to talk, Verres whom he embraced (*amplexatur*) and told to put aside all anxiety. “I hereby inform you,” he said, “that to-day’s election means your acquittal.” This remark, being overheard (*audissent*) by a number of honest gentlemen, was forthwith reported to me; or I should rather say, everyone told me of it as soon as he saw

⁸⁵ C. P. Craig, "Cicero as Orator," Pages 264–284 in *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric* (eds. W. J. Dominik and J. Hall; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 269.

⁸⁶ R. Kirchner, "Elocutio: Latin Prose Style," Pages 181–194 in *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric* (eds. W. J. Dominik and J. Hall; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 183.

⁸⁷ In John, we also find a frequent use of direct speeches, which makes the scene vivid in the mind of the readers. See further in Chapter 7, section 1.2, 1.3 and 2.1.

(*viderat*) me.

(Cicero, *Verrine Orations I*, 1.7.19; trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL I, 87)

In this passage, Cicero only describes those details of the encounter of Gaius and Verres which he thinks can make this narrative vivid and arouse emotion, such as the interaction between Gaius and Verres. He also makes a contrast between how Gaius interacted with Verres and how with others. This contrast is clearly used to heighten the negative feeling towards Verres.⁸⁸ Several verbs of sense perception are used or implied. When Curio observed Verres, he called out to him and congratulated him loudly. This implies that everyone who was there near the Arch of Fabius at the time could hear the voice of Curio and hear what he said. This employment of ἐνάργεια, first, brings the event vividly to life before the eyes of the audience or jury who are listening to Cicero. It also enhances the credibility of the narrative by referring to the existence of many witnesses, namely, all those who had heard Curio. Lastly, it indicates that Verres ‘attempted to interfere with the outcome of the trial’⁸⁹ and Cicero thereby hopes to arouse the audience’s indignation. Cicero goes on and says that Curio embraced Verres. This embrace of touch shows the intimate relationship between Verres and Curio, and this intimacy becomes the best evidence supporting the accusation of corruption against Verres in the trial.⁹⁰

Cicero explains how he came to know about the conversation between Verres and Curio: It was overheard by a number of gentlemen and they came and reported to Cicero, or rather, as he says, told Cicero as soon as they saw him. Cicero uses vivid descriptions to paint a picture for his readers which lets them see Curio embracing Verres and hear their conversation. This leads to their acceptance of the truth of the narrative and arouses their indignation at the corruption of members of the Court. The effect of ἐνάργεια in this passage corresponds to the effect that Cicero expounds in *De inventione*, which was discussed above, namely, the arousing of emotion (indignation in this case) and a contribution to the credibility of the narrative.⁹¹

⁸⁸ In John, ‘contrast’ is often used together with ‘sudden actions’ to create an emotional impact on the readers. See Chapter 7, section 1.3, 1.5.

⁸⁹ Innocenti, “Cicero”: 370.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 374.

⁹¹ Here Cicero is speaking to eyewitnesses, so through ἐνάργεια, he appeals to what his

This is the only passage in the *In Verrem actio prima* where several verbs of sense perception are used to effect ἐνάργεια.⁹² On the other hand, one finds more frequent employment of ἐνάργεια in the *In Verrem Actio secunda* where Cicero has to present more evidence and eyewitness testimony to persuade the jury of Verres' guilt.⁹³ Cicero has to present the evidence and testimony in a way which will catch the jury's attention and bring them onto his side. The *actio secunda* is never delivered, and that means that Cicero has to use more stylistic devices such as ἐνάργεια to heighten his readers' interest in and feelings about Verres' violent conduct to 'help compensate for the absence of delivery as a medium for conveying emotion.'⁹⁴ In the *actio secunda*, Verres' atrocities are narrated in detail and at length. In the following examples, we select only passages where Cicero appeals to or alludes to sense perception to achieve the effect of ἐνάργεια.

4.2.2. Creating a Pictorial Image by Noting Particular Features of Actions and Objects and Mentioning the Presence of a Crowd

In this next passage, Cicero again employs the device of noting particular features of actions and objects to achieve ἐνάργεια by describing the statues which Verres stole and placed in his house. He also appeals to the senses and the presence of the crowd to enhance the credibility of this event that he vividly describes.

audiences know from having seen it and seeks to make it vivid to them. The effect of the ἐνάργεια in Cicero is to arouse emotion and to contribute to the credibility of the narrative. For John, this works differently because he is not addressing eyewitnesses. He uses ἐνάργεια to elicit emotions of his readers, so that they can feel that they have seen what he has described. This is how he draws his readers into the narrative and thereby seeks to convince them. See further in Chapter 7, section 1.4, 6 and Chapter 8, section 2.1.1.

⁹² Innocenti makes the same observation and gives the reason for that. He says, 'That this is the only vivid description in the speech may be accounted for by the circumstances of the trial. Cicero had to present the case quickly-before the courts adjourned for fall festivals and before important positions in the government and court were occupied by people sympathetic to Verres; therefore, the first speech includes statements of fact and presentation of evidence with minimal argumentation and amplification.' *ibid.*, 366. However, Cicero concludes his speech by saying, 'If there is anyone who regrets the absence of the continuous speech for the prosecution, he shall hear it in the second part of the trial.' Of course, the second trial never took place for Verres fled after the first hearing. Cicero, *Verr. II*, xix; introduction by L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL.

⁹³ Although Höeg believes that the second speech was delivered, most scholars believe Pliny and think that it was never delivered. M. C. Alexander, "Hortensius' Speech in Defense of Verres," *Phoenix* 30 (1976): 46–53, at 47 n. 6.

⁹⁴ However, this is not to say that the speeches were meant to be read rather than to be heard. If they were to be delivered, the use of ἐνάργεια would still be included since 'holding the attention of both a listening and reading audience would be a consideration in speeches.' Innocenti, "Cicero": 368.

[H]ow it plunged the Samians into grief, and distressed all Asia! How the story spread through the world, so that not one of you has not heard (*inaudita*) it...the pictures, the statues he robbed that island of! I recognised the statues myself the other day in his house, on going there to go to my sealing. Where are those statues now, Verres, I mean those we saw (*vidimus*) in your house the other day, standing by all the pillars, and in all the spaces between the pillars too....

(Cicero, *Verrine Orations II*, 1.19.50–51 trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL I, 173, 175)

Two verbs of sense perception are used, namely, to hear and to see. Cicero emphasises the fact that the story of Verres' evil deed has spread through the world and that everyone has heard of it.⁹⁵ If this speech was indeed delivered, the audience present would have remembered the story or would feel that they ought to have known about it. Even readers who had never heard of the story would be led to believe that the story must be true since it was said that so many people had heard it.⁹⁶ Thus the use of ἐνάργεια amplifies evidence and contributes to the plausibility of the narrative. Then Cicero points out that the statues were once stored in Verres' house. To emphasise this fact, Cicero asks Verres: Where are the statues that 'we saw in your house?' His description of the exact location where the statues used to be placed also helps the readers and those who have never seen the statues to see, in their minds, where the statues used to be. Cicero deliberately uses verbs of sense perception to produce ἐνάργεια and, by so doing, he helps the readers to see what he says he has seen and to hear what he says he has heard. Readers of this passage will tend to believe that Verres did steal the statues and place them in his house.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ In his first speech, Cicero indicates clearly that everyone knows of Verres' atrocities. He says, 'I do not believe that one human being lives, who has not heard the name of Verres spoken, and cannot also repeat the tale of his evil doings' (*Verr. I*, 5.15).

⁹⁶ Similar usage occurs frequently. For example, 'You have all heard of, and most of you have seen...' (*Verr. II*, 5.27.68).

⁹⁷ John often gives detailed descriptions to help enhance vividness, such as providing the name of the place, the name of the person and particular features of the object. See further in Chapter 7, section 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and Chapter 8, 2.4.1.

Cicero states himself that it is not only the sense of sight that ἐνάργεια appeals to but also the other senses, such as smell. Cicero evokes smell in his effort to move his audience to prejudge Apronius, one of Verres' tax collectors.⁹⁸

Apronius, whom all others regarded as an uncouth savage, appeared to Verres an agreeable and cultivated person. Everyone else loathed him and shunned the sight of him (*neque videre vellent*): Verres could not live without him. Others could not drink in the same room with him: Verres would drink out of the same cup with him, and the disgusting smell (*odor*) of the man's breath and body, which we are told not even animals could endure, to him, and to him alone, seemed sweet and pleasant (*suavis et iucundus*).

(Cicero, *Verrine Orations II*, 3.9.23; trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL II, 27)

Cicero describes the particular features of Apronius, Verres' right-hand man, in order to create an unfavourable pictorial image in his audience's minds. The appeal to sense perception makes his description vivid, leading his audience to imagine the disgusting odour of the man's breath and body, a smell that even animals could not endure.

Another example of describing action can be found in Book IV, where Cicero provides a detailed description of how the statue of Diana was removed.⁹⁹ He again alludes to the sense of smell when he depicts the removal of Diana which was ordered by Verres.

No story is better known throughout Sicily than that of how, when Diana was being borne out of the town, all the matrons and maidens of Segesta flocked to the spot, anointed (*unxisse*) her with perfumes (*unguentis*), covered her with garlands and flowers, and burning (*incensis*) incense (*ture*) and spices (*odoribus*) escorted her to the

⁹⁸ Innocenti, "Cicero": 370.

⁹⁹ John often describes particular actions to create pictorial image and thus enhance vividness. See Chapter 7, section 1.4, 2.2 and Chapter 8, 2.1.1, 2.3.2.

frontier of their land. (Cicero, *Verrine Orations II*, 4.35.77; trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL II, 377)

Although the word ‘smell’ is not used here, the anointing with perfumes and the burning of incense and spices strongly imply that the air was full of fragrance. The appeal to the sense of smell has several functions. Any hearers or readers who had been present at the event will remember the smell of perfumes and incense. For those who had not been there, Cicero evokes the fragrant smell in their imaginations, which makes the description more real.¹⁰⁰ Further, the acts of anointing and burning incense are religious acts. They show, therefore, the piety of the people of Segesta, in contrast to the impiety of Verres.

One more example of describing particular features of an object is found in the narrative of Sopater. Cicero vividly describes the state of Sopater tied to a statue. The sense of touch is alluded to when Cicero tries to create pity for Sopater, who underwent great agony when he was ‘bound naked to the metal surface amid all the rain and cold.’¹⁰¹ Only when the Senate promised Verres the statue of Mercury did Verres relent ‘and so it was that, already nearly frozen stiff, Sopater was removed half-dead from the statue of Gaius Merellus’ (*Verrine Orations II*, 4.41.87). The appeal to sense perception not only helps the audience to picture the scene of a poor man in the rain and cold but also makes them feel the coldness and agony of being bound to the cold metal surface. Their pity towards this poor man is stirred and their indignation about Verres’ brutality is inflamed.

The last example of noting particular features that we look at is in Book IV, where Cicero presents the case of Antiochus, the prince of Syria. Verres, says Cicero, tricked Antiochus and appropriated the candelabrum which was to be dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus. After Verres stole Antiochus’ candelabrum, Antiochus went to the market place at Syracuse in despair. Cicero creates a pictorial image of

¹⁰⁰ In John, there are two incidents that appeal to the sense of smell, the anointing story and the raising of the Lazarus. There they have the same effect of creating vividness. See discussion in Chapter 7, section 1.6 and 2.3.

¹⁰¹ Innocenti, “Cicero”: 370.

Antiochus, the prince of Syria with tears in his eyes, crying in a market. This vivid picture is also intended to trigger people's indignation toward Verres.¹⁰²

I repeat, with tears in his eyes calling on God and man to be his witness (*flens ac deos hominesque contestans*), the prince in a loud voice declared that a lamp-stand wrought of precious stone, which he was intending to send to the Capitol...had been taken from him by Gaius Verres.

(Cicero, *Verrine Orations II*, 4.29.67; trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL II, 363)

4.2.3. Contrast

Another method that Cicero uses often is contrast. To make Verres' acts seem more outrageous, Cicero contrasts Verres with generals who had conquered other cities, such as Marcus Marcellus,¹⁰³ Lucius Scipio, Flamininus, Lucius Paulus and Lucius Mummius (*Verrine Orations II*, 1.21.55).¹⁰⁴ These people did not bring statues home but gave them to the nation to adorn the cities of the nation.¹⁰⁵

These were men of high rank and eminent character, but their houses were empty of statues and pictures; while we still see (*videmus*) the whole city, and temples of the gods, and every part of Italy, adorned with the gifts and memorials that they brought us.

(Cicero, *Verrine Orations II*, 1.21.55; trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL I, 179)

¹⁰² When John narrates the story of Lazarus, he also appeals to emotion to make his scene vivid. He mentions several times that people weep for the death of Lazarus. For example, Jesus sees Mary and the 'Jews' weeping (John 11:33) and Jesus also weeps (John 11:36). The purpose of this kind of vividness is to elicit sympathy for Jesus. See further in Chapter 7, section 1.6.

¹⁰³ Cicero refers to Marcellus in Book IV and compares him with Verres as well. *Verr. II*, 4.54.120–122

¹⁰⁴ For a brief introduction to each of them, see T. N. Mitchell, *Cicero, Verrines II.1* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1986), 187.

¹⁰⁵ Mitchell understands this as an 'effective form of *comparatio*, going from a lesser variety of wrongdoing to a greater.' *Ibid.*, 185.

The use of sight again helps the readers to picture the city adorned with those gifts. While Verres' house is full of statues, those men's houses are empty of statues. The verb 'seeing' reminds the readers of the statues which Cicero saw in Verres' house and the statues one can still see in every part of Italy. By comparison, Cicero is able to further discredit Verres.¹⁰⁶

Another example of using contrast to achieve ἐνάργεια is found in Book III. Cicero contrasts the landscape before and after Verres' corrupt activities. Cicero affirms to the judges that he will not exaggerate the facts to strengthen his case against Verres. He says, 'I will put before you truthfully, and as vividly as I can, the impression my own eyes and understanding conveyed to me' (*Verr. II*, 3.18.47). He goes on to describe what he saw:

When I arrived in Sicily after a four years' absence, it had to my eyes the look (*visa*) we associate with countries that have been the seat of a cruel and protracted war. The fields and the hill-sides that I had once seen (*vidissem*) green and flourishing I now saw (*videbam*) devastated and deserted; the countryside seemed itself to feel the loss of the men who once tilled it, and to be in the mourning for its old masters. (Cicero, *Verrine Orations II*, 3.18.47; trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL II, 55)

The use of sight not only enhances the vividness of Cicero's narration but also helps the readers to create a picture in their minds of the once green and flourishing fields now devastated and deserted. If they had been there, they would have felt what Cicero had felt.¹⁰⁷ As a result, their indignation is aroused against the one who had caused this desolation.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ For the function of comparison, see *ibid.*, 186.

¹⁰⁷ In Cicero 'contrast' can be used to compare two types of personality or to compare the past and the present in order to shed light on the present devastation. By doing so, the readers' sympathy is aroused. The use of contrast between the two in order to elicit sympathy is also used by Plato (see section 4.1.2) and John (Chapter 7, section 1.5).

¹⁰⁸ Innocenti also notes the contrast between the landscapes before and after Verres' activity. This makes the scene vivid. He observes, 'The absence of life described by Cicero may become more vivid when contrasted with the signs of life usually seen.' Innocenti, "Cicero": 372.

4.2.4. Using Verbal Cues to Trigger Imagination

Cicero sometimes uses ‘verbal cues’ to trigger the imagination in order to produce ἐνάργεια. This is done either by inviting his hearers to imagine or by telling his hearers that he is imagining something.¹⁰⁹ For example, Cicero tells his readers and hearers that he is using his imagination to recollect a scene when he says an image appears ‘before my eyes.’ This is an indication that his readers should now use their imaginations to see with their minds’ eyes. Usually sense perception is used to assist the audience’s imagination. Cicero’s narrative on his visit to Henna serves as a good example.

I think of that sanctuary, that sacred spot, that solemn worship: before my eyes (*versantur ante oculos omnia*) rises the picture of the day when I visited Henna, my reception by the priests of Ceres wearing their fillets and carrying their sacred boughs, my address to the assembled townsfolk, in which my words were heard (*in quo ego cum loquerer*) amid such groans and weeping (*tanti gemitus fletusque fiebant*) as showed the whole town to be a prey to the bitterest distress. (Cicero, *Verrine Orations II*, 4.50.110; trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL II, 419)

The phrase ‘before my eyes’ tells the readers that Cicero is himself imagining the scene and is inviting his readers to do the same. He is also inviting his readers to visualise the pictures in his mind. Although Cicero does not use the verb of sight, his description helps the readers to picture the scene. The use of hearing along with groans and weeping enhances the vividness of the scene as if the readers can hear the words of Cicero amid the groans and weeping caused by Verres. This will evoke the readers’ pity toward these people and they will become sympathetic to their situation. At the same time, it will arouse their indignation against Verres.

This technique can be observed in practice in Cicero’s *Verrine Orations II*. 5.86. Before Cicero’s descriptions of the praetor, he starts a circumstance that will

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 374.

stimulate the imagination of the readers, by mentioning that the praetor ‘had not been seen’ for many days (*qui visus multis diebus non esset*), but on this occasion, he showed’ (*in conspectum*) himself to his sailors. It is only after using these sensory verbs that Cicero provides details of the image of the praetor: ‘There stood the Roman praetor, in his slippers, with a purple cloak and a tunic down to his heels, leaning on one of his women on the beach....’ Thus, what Cicero is doing here is not simply providing detailed description of the praetor, but using words that provoke the imagination of the readers to achieve ἐνάργεια.¹¹⁰

4.2.5. Repetition and the Presence of the crowd

Like Plato, Cicero also uses repetition and the presence of the crowd to effect ἐνάργεια.¹¹¹ When he is describing the doors of Minerva’s temple, he invites his audience to be eyewitnesses, for any of them who had been there and had seen the doors would know that his description was true. He says:

And now I come to speak of the doors of this temple. Those who never saw (*viderunt*) them may, I fear, suspect me of unduly colouring and exaggerating all my facts: yet no one ought to suppose that my eagerness should make me willing that all those distinguished persons – especially such as are members of this Court – who have been at Syracuse, and have seen (*viderint*) these doors, should be able to detect me in making reckless and untruthful statements.

(Cicero, *Verrine Orations II*, 4.56.124; trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL II, 433)

Some of the judges at Verres’ trial have been to Syracuse and thus have seen the doors. They would remember what they had seen. By pointing out that any of the judges who had seen the doors would know that his account was accurate, Cicero

¹¹⁰ The use of the verbal cue is also found in John’s Gospel, although the terms used are not quite the same as Cicero’s use of ‘before my eyes.’ For example, in the feeding miracle, John says that Jesus ‘lifted up his eyes and saw’ (John 6:5). This is a verbal cue to invite the readers to see with their mind’s eye through imagination. For other examples of using this technique in John, see Chapter 7, section 1.4 and Chapter 8, section 2.1.1.

¹¹¹ For Plato’s and John’s use of repetition and the presence of the crowd, see 4.1.1 and footnote 63.

intends to influence those who have not seen them, but will tend to believe what Cicero says because of his reference to other eyewitnesses present in the Court. The same technique occurs in Plato's *Apology* (19c–19d). Socrates reminds the jury about the play they have seen. He asserts that what the play said about him was not true. Then he asks the jury to be his witnesses, since many of them have heard him conversing and can testify that these things are not true.

We look at one more example in this category, a story related to Antiochus, whom we have encountered in the earlier discussion. Cicero emphasises the injustice done to the young man and to the Roman state by the theft, and he appeals to the presence of crowd to make his scene vivid. He calls on Quintus Catulus, who was the restorer of the Temple and is also one of the judges at Verres' trial to be his witness.¹¹²

You have heard (*audisti*) Quintus Minucius state that the prince Antiochus stayed in his house at Syracuse; that, to his knowledge, the lamp-stand was taken to Verres, and that, to his knowledge, it was not sent back again. You have heard (*audisti*) Roman citizens of the Syracuse district state, and you shall hear (*audies*) others state, that it was vowed and consecrated to Almighty Jupiter by the prince Antiochus in their own hearing (*audientibus*).

(Cicero, *Verrine Orations II*, 4.29.70; trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, LCL II, 367)

Cicero first depicts vividly how desperate the prince was at the market place (*Verr. II*, 4.29.67). The mention of the location indicates the presence of a crowd.¹¹³ As Innocenti notes, there are two reasons for noting the presence of a crowd. First, it 'lends credibility and plausibility to the scene being vividly described; the speaker sets before the mind's eye something that real eyes have seen.' Secondly, it heightens 'the emotional impact of a scene.'¹¹⁴ When Cicero addresses Catulus, he uses the verb 'to hear' three times. The first time, it is used to refer to an individual, Quintus

¹¹² Cicero provides this information in his narrative. *Verr. II*, 4.29.69–70.

¹¹³ Cf. *Verr. I*, 1.7.19 for the mention of the crowd. The same usage occurs in Plato's *Apology*. See discussion in section 3.

¹¹⁴ Innocenti, "Cicero": 379.

Minucius. The second and the third times, it is used to refer to groups of people, Roman citizens of Syracuse and others respectively. This is to reinforce the authenticity of the event and to arouse the readers' pity for the prince and further indignation against Verres.

In Plato's *Apology*, we find frequent reference to the presence of a crowd and frequent appeals to the sense of hearing. Socrates, when defending himself, asks the judges to be his witnesses for they 'have heard me say at many times and places' (Plato, *Apology* 31d). In Socrates' speech, his jury are also his witnesses for they have heard many of his conversations. By appealing to the sense of hearing, both Cicero and Socrates convert the judges into their eyewitnesses. Thus ἐνάργεια is achieved through sense perception. It then serves to amplify the evidence and contributes to its credibility.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored the rhetorical use of ἐνάργεια which was intended to 'bring before the eyes' of the audience the events that were being described, so as to make an audience feel like participants and involve them emotionally. This was such a prominent and well-developed feature of Graeco-Roman rhetoric, in both theory and practice, that it is very likely that it influenced John's presentation of Jesus. Several methods are identified in the rhetorical handbooks and identifiable in Cicero's texts. Most of these methods appeal to sense perception in order to create a picture in the minds of the hearers or readers. Plato and Cicero offer prominent examples and show how these techniques are used to achieve ἐνάργεια. In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates often combines sense perception and testimony to make his readers into his witnesses. Plato's employment of ἐνάργεια is to persuade his readers to believe his presentation of Socrates' trial and to share his viewpoint that Socrates was innocent.

Our study of Cicero's use of ἐνάργεια shows that it has several functions. First, it promotes sympathy with, or antipathy towards, the actors in a scene. This is done by triggering the audiences' memories or arousing their emotions. Secondly, it has the ability to amplify evidence and thus contribute to credibility. Cicero applies several

techniques, such as repetition, contrast and creating pictorial images. To achieve ἐνάργεια, he appeals, in particular, to sense perception. This is no different from that which we find in Greek rhetoric in our example, Plato's *Apology*. However, whereas in Greek rhetoric, an appeal to senses other than sight and hearing is not common, we can observe in Cicero's writings an appeal even to the senses of smell and touch. In the *Verrine Orations*, Cicero applies the technique of ἐνάργεια when he wants to trigger the memory or imagination of his audience or to arouse their emotions. The aim of his use of ἐνάργεια in the case we have looked at was to persuade his judges and readers that Verres was guilty. Cicero's successful achievement of rhetoric in the *Verrine Orations* is due to his use of ἐνάργεια which serves the purpose of persuasion. The examination of Cicero's use of ἐνάργεια in the *Verrine Orations* again shows that ἐνάργεια has the ability to involve the readers personally and emotionally by creating a vivid scene before their eyes and that its aim is to persuade the audience to take the same view as the speaker or author. For Plato and Cicero and other ancient writers, the main purpose of employing ἐνάργεια was to persuade people in the sense of working on their emotions so that they felt convinced of the events happening as if before their eyes.

In Chapter 4, we explored the use of sense perception and testimony in the Jewish Scriptures. There, we also see the employment of techniques which help to draw readers into the narratives. These techniques are comparable to the use of ἐνάργεια in Graeco-Roman text. In order for ἐνάργεια to work properly, it is very important that the readers share common knowledge or concepts. The materials discussed in Chapter 4 are the suggested common knowledge or concepts which John uses in his Gospel and are developed further to suit his purpose. In order to draw his readers into his narrative and persuade them emotionally, John has to use materials and concepts that his readers are familiar with. Thus, in the Gospel, we can detect John's use of this common Jewish knowledge, such as the concept of testimony in relation to the knowledge of God, the concept that God is made known through sense-perceptible miracles and that God's glory and presence are manifested in a visible tabernacle and ark, and the symbolic sign-acts of prophets. Thus these key concepts in Jewish Scriptures serve as the basis for John's employment of ἐνάργεια to be effective. The systematisation of rhetorical techniques for producing ἐνάργεια serves as a

foundation for our analysis of John's literary technique in making sense perception serve testimony, in the second part of this thesis.

Chapter 6: The Theological Significance of Sense Perception

In the Gospel of John, many people experience Jesus physically, either through seeing his signs or through hearing his words, but not all of them have faith in Jesus. This phenomenon often leads to an overemphasis on a symbolic interpretation of sensory events,¹ hence diminishing the significance of physical sense perception. However, we should reconsider the assumption that physical senses are not important for John; our study of the Jewish and Greco-Roman background showed that physical senses are indispensable to gaining knowledge of God in the theological tradition on which John draws, and equally integral to the rhetorical techniques developed to enhance the credibility of judicial testimony in the Greco-Roman world in which John wrote his Gospel. The rest of this thesis will explore the Gospel and will show that John takes up the Old Testament theology of revelation and relocates it in his presentation of God's revelation in Jesus. He also makes the physical events happening in Jesus' ministry rhetorically vivid through Graeco-Roman literary techniques.

This chapter lays the theological and narratological foundation for our discussion of John's use of sense perception for testimony in the next two chapters. The aim of this chapter, then, is to show that John does value physical sense perception as a means of gaining knowledge of God. It seeks to show how John hopes to mediate this to his readers through a literary text. There are four parts in this chapter. The first part of the chapter examines John's presentation of Jesus. It is argued that Jesus' perception of God is theologically important for the readers because it is only through seeing Jesus that seeing God becomes possible. The second part of the chapter moves from Jesus' perception of God to two key witnesses within the narrative, namely the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple, who are said not only to see Jesus physically, but to 'see' and 'testify.' That is, they perceive Jesus'

¹ Cf. Bultmann, *John*, 114. Studies on the symbolism in John focus on the symbolic meaning of images that can be perceived by the senses rather than the significance of senses. Koester, *Symbolism*, 4; Zimmermann, "Imagery," 1–46; Lee, *Symbolic*, 12–13. Witkamp argues that Jesus' thirst in John 19:28–30 should be given a spiritual reading rather than a literal one. L. T. Witkamp, "Jesus' Thirst in John 19:28–30: Literal or Figurative?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 489–510. See further in Chapter 1, section 2.1.2.

significance through a sensory encounter with him, and so bear witness to God's revelation through him. Thus they model for the readers the ideal ways of responding to Jesus' sense-perceptible activities. The privileged position granted to these witnesses by the narrator makes clear the significance of the combination of sense perception and testimony. The third part of the chapter moves from the depiction of sense perception and testimony within the narrative to the way John mediates this through his text, so as to make the readers into better witnesses to Jesus. The last part clarifies the relationship between sense perception and spiritual insight.

1. The Theological Significance of Jesus' Sense Perception and Testimony

That God can be known through the senses is evident in the Old Testament material discussed in Chapter 4. John draws on this theology of God's revelation and reconfigures it so that it is concentrated in Jesus. He develops his own portrayal of how the earthly Jesus manifests God through the senses in three ways. Firstly, in the Prologue, he shows it through his portrayal of incarnation and the earthly Jesus as the exegete of God. Secondly, Jesus' perception of God and his embodied, human enactment of that perception make possible people's physical or sensory perception of God. Thirdly, John applies the language of testimony to Jesus' role in revealing God to others through the senses. We discuss each of these in detail in the following sections.

1.1. Jesus' Divine Origin and His Exegesis of God

In this section, we show how John takes up the emphasis on sense perception in the Old Testament theology of revelation and refocuses it on Jesus through the doctrine of incarnation and Jesus' role as God's exegete. John emphasises the importance of seeing Jesus physically in three stages. First, he presents the invisibility of the Logos. Then he portrays this Logos as entering the sensory world and becoming visible. Lastly, this visible Logos bridges the gap between the spiritual and physical world. He is the mediator between divinity and humanity and thus is the exegete of God.

Jesus is introduced in the beginning of the Prologue (John 1:1) as the pre-incarnate Logos which establishes his divine authority. The statement Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος (John 1:1a) indicates Jesus' pre-existence before creation. The next statement, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν (John 1:1b) shows that Jesus was present with God, but was, at the same time, distinct from God.² This indicates Jesus' intimate relationship with God, which will be explained later in the Prologue and throughout the Gospel. Finally, Jesus is characterised as God (καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, John 1:1c). The intimate relationship between Jesus and God is emphasised again in John 1:2. The term ἐν ἀρχῇ is associated with creation and hence it is not surprising that Jesus is characterised as the source and power of creation: 'in him was life' (John 1:3–4). Even though what we have encountered so far are abstract terms, the repetition of the term ὁ λόγος, ἐν ἀρχῇ and πρὸς τὸν θεόν and the slow unfolding of Jesus' traits³ ('Logos,' pre-existence, life, light, etc.) help to draw the reader's attention to him. But the Logos does not only remain in the divine realm – he enters the physical realm.

This divine Logos enters the sensory world and takes on human flesh and his glory is seen by the believing community (John 1:14). The humanity of Jesus is important because this makes him a bridge, the only bridge, between the invisible divine world and the visible physical world. The opening words of John 1:14 are καὶ ὁ λόγος. One immediately recalls John 1:1, where ὁ λόγος first appears. There is a contrast between the divine Logos (invisible) in John 1:1 and the incarnate Logos (visible) in John 1:14. The divine Logos not only has come to the world but also has become flesh and made his dwelling among 'us' (καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν). The term σὰρξ denotes 'full human and physical reality' and the 'tangibility of the Logos' implies that one can experience him with all our senses.⁴

² D. F. Tolmie, "The Characterization of God in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 20 (1998): 57–75, at 62.

³ I am using Chatman's model, where characters can be defined as 'a paradigm of traits.' His definition of a trait is 'a relatively stable or abiding personal quality.' S. B. Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 125–126. Although Chatman usually uses adjectives to describe traits, it is possible to use 'nouns or narrative propositions.' D. F. Tolmie, *Jesus' Farewell to the Disciples: John 13:1-17:26 in Narratological Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 124. For a paradigm of traits of Jesus, see *ibid.*, 125–126.

⁴ Hirsch-Luipold, *Sinne*, 23.

In John 1:14, John uses two verbs to emphasise the physicality of the Logos. The first verb is ἐγένετο. It could mean ‘was born,’ but, as Barrett argues, the verb γεννηθῆναι has just been used in this sense. The sudden change of verbs would be harsh.⁵ Schnackenburg suggests that this announces ‘a change in the mode of being of the Logos.’ He was in glory with God but now takes on human flesh.⁶ To understand this verb correctly, we must take its predicate, σάρξ, into consideration. Barrett suggests that this verb is used in the same sense as in John 1:6: ‘the Word came on the (human) scene – as flesh, a man.’⁷ However, as said earlier, there is a notion of a change of condition. The Logos, which was divine and infinite, has now become flesh in the finite form of humanity. Σάρξ indicates full human reality, including visibility. This implication of the visual encounter is expressed fully in the next phrase, ‘made his dwelling among us’.

The verb σκηνώ literally means ‘pitched his tent or tabernacle.’⁸ This verb is related to the noun σκηνή, where God met with Israel before the temple was built.⁹ In Exodus 33:9 LXX, it reads ‘whenever Moses entered the Tent (σκηνή), the Pillar of Cloud descended to the entrance to the Tent (σκηνή) and God spoke with Moses.’ The visible Pillar of Cloud indicated God’s presence.

Another connection with σκηνώ is the Hebrew verb כָּנַן. In the Old Testament, this verb is used of God dwelling with Israel (Exod 25:8; 29:46; Zech 2:14). As we saw in Chapter 4, the Israelites learn that God chooses to be present with them by dwelling among them in the tabernacle. The verb also refers to the glory of God that filled the tabernacle (Exod 40:34–35) and settled over Mount Sinai (Exod 24:16).¹⁰ The cloud is the visible manifestation of God’s presence, thus ‘the abiding presence of God suggested his glory.’¹¹ In post-Biblical Hebrew, the dwelling of God’s glory also denotes the visible manifestation of God.¹²

⁵ Barrett, *John*, 165. But this view is rejected by A. J. Köstenberger, *John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004), 40.

⁶ Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:267.

⁷ Barrett, *John*, 165.

⁸ Carson, *John*, 127; Lincoln, *John*, 104.

⁹ Carson, *John*, 127.

¹⁰ For detailed discussion on the theme of tabernacle and God’s glory in the Old Testament, see Chapter 4, section 4.

¹¹ Barrett, *John*, 165.

¹² Carson, *John*, 128.

By using the language of σκηνόω, John combines reference to both tabernacle imagery and ‘the dwelling of God’s glory.’ Both are a continuation of the Old Testament tradition of visible revelation of God but are concentrated now in Jesus, in a human being, in flesh, rather than in a tabernacle or building. The radiant glory of God in the tabernacle is now embodied in the flesh of Jesus and will ultimately be perceived through Jesus’ blood, wounds and death. Thus it is not surprising that John immediately adds a sensory verb, ‘we have seen (ἐθεασάμεθα) his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.’ The believing community can attest to the identity of Jesus and bear testimony to this fact because they have seen this glory,¹³ that is, the glory of God manifested in Jesus through the deeds and words of Jesus.¹⁴

John takes up the Old Testament concept of glory in his use of σκηνόω, but he develops his concept of glory in a radical way by the expression σὰρξ ἐγένετο. In the Old Testament, the incorporeal glory of God is made visible in the tabernacle by fire and clouds (Exod 24:16; 40:34, 35; Deut 5:24). By evoking this concept of glory, John is claiming that this glory has been relocated in Jesus. John is not saying that we visually see the radiance of light in Jesus but John’s language does appeal to our visual imagination of the radiant glory in the tabernacle. The way in which John interprets and reapplies that concept of glory requires us to experience the divine presence in a place that is visually very different, that is, not in a physical building or a place, but in the mortal flesh of Jesus. This is shown by John’s use of σὰρξ and its association with the language of coming to be. Σὰρξ is used by John to refer to what is ‘earth-bound’ (John 3:6), ‘transient’ and ‘perishable’ (John 6:63), in contrast to that which is divine and spiritual.¹⁵ In John 1:13, σὰρξ is associated with humans as opposed to God (though there with a focus on desires and perhaps, implicitly, on sin). Γίνομαι stands in sharp contrast to the language of ‘being’ that was associated with the pre-incarnate logos (John 1:1–5) and calls attention to the idea that incarnation involves entering the world of coming to be, and hence also of passing away (death). By connecting glory with mortal flesh, John hints that Jesus’ glory is linked to his

¹³ The LXX is a significant background of the Johannine concept of glory. In the LXX, glory refers to the visible presence of God and the praise and honour attributed to God after God has manifested his character. W. R. Cook, "The 'Glory' Motif in the Johannine Corpus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (1984): 291–297, at 292.

¹⁴ Williams, "Isaiah," 112.

¹⁵ Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:267; MacLeod, "Incarnation": 75.

crucifixion and exaltation, a theme which is developed in the latter part of the Gospel. The glory of Jesus is visible, yet one needs spiritual insight to see that glory. In the Gospel, many people see the mighty acts of Jesus but fail to see the glory of God in Jesus because they lack spiritual insight. The ironic presentation of these characters will be discussed fully in the next chapter.

John's claim, 'we have seen (ἐθεασάμεθα) his glory,'¹⁶ is taken by some scholars to mean that the believing community are eyewitnesses of the Son of God, for they have seen Jesus who lived among them.¹⁷ John's emphasis on the physicality of sense perception is noted by early Church Fathers and they often appeal to John's Gospel to affirm that Christ had a truly human nature and was indeed the fully incarnate Logos.¹⁸ However, noting the strong emphasis on Old Testament tradition in John 1:14, a better approach to understanding John's use of the communal vision is by comparing it to Old Testament usage.

In Chapter 4, we discussed the use of communal vision in phrases such as 'we saw' or 'you have seen' in Deuteronomy. There, Moses uses these phrases in the context of testifying to the mighty acts of God and to how God has brought the people out of Egypt. Not all his audience are eyewitnesses of these events but they are included in his statement nevertheless. This use of rhetorical eyewitness language has a special purpose which is related to Deuteronomy's special concern with memory, expressed in terms like 'remember,'¹⁹ and 'do not forget' (Deut 6:12; 8:11, 9:7). This

¹⁶ M. Barth argues, 'the glory that John saw is the same glory that Isaiah saw in Isa 6:1, for John in John 12:41 points to the vision of Isaiah. In this sense, if the *Schauen* here has nothing to do with the vision of natural eyes, it can hardly be a recommendation.' He points out that *θεάομαι* is not used purely to refer to a spiritual, i.e. non-sensory vision in John. Barth, *Augenzeuge*, 94.

¹⁷ Brown (*John*, 1:34) notes that 'we have seen' may be viewed as a reference to apostolic witness, like the 'we' of the Prologue to 1 John. Lieu also thinks that this is eyewitness language. J. M. Lieu, *The Second and Third Epistles of John* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 137. Bultmann (*John*, 70), although he does not rule out this being spoken by an eyewitnesses, argues, 'it is spoken by all believers.' Thus John 1:14 may contain an element of eyewitnessing, though it does not rule out the element of 'perception of faith,' which Lindars (*John*, 95) claims. Besides, *ἐθεασάμεθα* is in the aorist tense. This also suggests that the emphasis is on the fact of seeing, which had been completed in the past. Thus, as Carson (*John*, 128) suggests, in the context of incarnation, this phrase 'we have seen his glory' must refer to the fact that the Evangelist and other Christians actually saw Jesus in the days of his earthly life. 'Glory' refers to the signs and to the cross because it is through these events that Jesus' glory was revealed.

¹⁸ T. Aquinas, *Commentary on St. John: Part Two: Chapters 8–21* (trans. F. R. Larcher; Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1998), 20.6.2559. Cf. C. E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 471, 474.

¹⁹ Cf. Deut. 5:15; 7:18; 8:2, 18; 9:7, 27; 15:15, 19; 16:12; 24:9, 18, 22; 25:17, 19; 32:7.

rhetorical use of communal vision is to ‘actualise’ the realities of Israel’s past in the minds of new generations. When we come to John, we see that John is doing something similar. The term ‘remember / remind’ (μυμνήσκομαι / ὑπομυμνήσκω) is used four times in the Gospel (John 2:17, 22; 12:16; 14:26). In these verses, John narrates that the disciples remember Jesus’ deeds and words when they possess or show spiritual insight to understand his deeds and words correctly after his resurrection. Thus, in John, the communal vision also functions rhetorically to ‘actualise’ in the minds of believers the realities of the past memory of Jesus’ deeds and acts. In the Graeco-Roman world too, the rhetor often conceptualises memory as a visual phenomenon.²⁰ Sense perception used in the juridical context is often associated with memory. Thus John’s readers would easily understand his combination of ‘memory’ and ‘testimony’ as a ‘compositional technique.’²¹ The rhetorical use of eyewitness language and the motif of memory have, then, a literary function in drawing the Christian readers into the narrative, not merely for literary purposes but also for religious and devotional ones.

Jesus bridges the gap between the divine and the human realms by entering the sensory world. Not only that, he is the mediator of the divine. His role as mediator is closely related to the issues of sense perception: ‘No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known’ (John 1:18). To show that, John makes a comparison between Moses and Jesus (John 1:17).²² John regards Moses as God’s mediator, through whom the law was given.²³ But Moses has now been replaced by Jesus, through whom grace and truth are given.²⁴ If we read John 1:18 together with John 1:17, we see some key terms, such as, ‘law,’ ‘grace,’ ‘truth’ and ‘seeing God,’ which suggest that Exodus 33 and 34 might

²⁰ T. Thatcher, "John's Memory Theater: The Fourth Gospel and Ancient Mnemo-Rhetoric," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69 (2007): 487–505, at 498. For how sense perception helps to trigger memory, see discussion in Chapter 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 502.

²² C. A. Maronde, "Moses in the Gospel of John," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 77 (2013): 23–44, at 26.

²³ W. A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 287.

²⁴ R. B. Edwards, "Charin Anti Charitos (John 1:16): Grace and the Law in the Johannine Prologue," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (1988): 3–15.

be the background to John.²⁵ If this is the case, then John's statement, 'no one has ever seen God' in John 1:18 is a bold statement apparently contradicting Moses' private theophany in Exodus 33 and 34.

In Exodus 33:20–23, Moses asks to see God's glory, but God allows him to see only his back. In Exodus 34:1–6, God asks Moses to come up the mountain to meet him. We are told that God 'descended in the cloud and stood with Moses there' (Exod 34:5). After Moses came down from the mountain, his face shone because he had been talking with God (Exod 34:29–30). What this indicates is that Moses is bearing something of the visible aspect of God's glory down to Israel, when he returns to them. The Israelites' fearful reaction when they see Moses' shining face is the same reaction as shown when they experience the theophany on Mount Sinai, which seems to indicate that Moses is in some way the representation of God's glory.²⁶ Similarly Jesus is the mediator between God and humanity who represents God to the people. The Sinai theophany is also where Moses is told how to build the Tabernacle, where God's glory will dwell among Israel. We find the same language in John 1:14. By connecting all these references to the glory of the Tabernacle and the glory captured in the face of Moses after he had been with God, John is inviting his reader to see in Jesus the role that Moses had performed. The Glory of God, which Moses once bore, is now focused and relocated in Jesus (1:14, 17–18).

Thus John 1:18 is significant because it brings out both the theological theme of 'seeing God' and also the Johannine theology of sense perception. In John 1:18, John confirms Jesus' identity as the *μονογενής* who shares the deity that is attributed to God.²⁷ There is, however, the question of whether this 'high Christology' is found elsewhere in the Gospel²⁸ and whether John's Christology is Christocentric or

²⁵ See A. T. Hanson, "John I. 14–18 and Exodus xxxiv," *New Testament Studies* 23 (1976): 90–101; M. E. Boismard, *Moses or Jesus: An Essay in Johannine Christology* (trans. B. Viviano; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 93–98; Edwards, "Prologue": 10.

²⁶ See the discussion of Moses' perception of God in Chapter 4, section 2.2.2.

²⁷ D. A. Fennema, "John 1.18: 'God the Only Son'," *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 124–135, at 131.

²⁸ H. Weder, "Deus Incarnatus: On the Hermeneutics of Christology in the Johannine Writings," Pages 327–345 in *Exploring the Gospel of John* (eds. R. A. Culpepper and C. C. Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

Theocentric.²⁹ But the problem that arises from John 1:18, which this section is concerned with, is the issue of sense perception and how it reinforces Jesus' role as God's exegete. We now take a closer look at John 1:18:

No one has ever seen God (Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε),³⁰ it is the *unique one, God* (μονογενὴς θεός),³¹ who *is at the Father's bosom*, who has made him known' (John 1:18).³²

'No one has ever seen God' is a statement that distances God from human beings. Because of this distance, knowing God is a problem. We find in the Gospel different ways of portraying this problem: misunderstanding, irony and the ambiguities of the characters. Therefore, the impossibility of seeing God is not only a theological question of sense perception, but also a question of epistemology. It brings out an epistemological question: how can people know God?³³ It is through our senses that we gain knowledge, even the knowledge of God. If John denies this possibility, how can people get to know God? The solution of this problem is found in John 1:18b: it is the *unique one, God* (μονογενὴς θεός), who *is at the Father's bosom*, who has made him known.' Jesus is an authoritative 'exegete' who can make God known.

²⁹ C. K. Barrett, "Christocentric or Theocentric? Observations on the Theological Method of the Fourth Gospel," Pages 1–18 in *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982); Smith, *Theology*.

³⁰ A similar phrase occurs in 1 John 4:12, 'No one has ever seen God (θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται); if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.' The contexts of these two passages are, however, very different. In John 1:14, the emphasis is on Christological revelation. John speaks of Jesus as the 'sole exegete of the Father.' W. E. Sproston, "Witnesses to What Was Ἀπ' Ἀρχῆς: 1 John's Contribution to Our Knowledge of Tradition in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (1992): 43–65, at 50. In 1 John 4:12, this phrase is used in the context of loving one another. The theme of God's invisibility returns in 1 John 4:20 where the focus is on loving one's brother who can be seen.

³¹ My translation in italics. There are two possible textual variants: ὁ μονογενὴς θεός (P⁷⁵ κ¹) or μονογενὴς θεός (P⁶⁶ κ* B C*), and ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός (A C³ K). Scholars who accept ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός are Brown, *John*, 1:4; Bultmann, *John*, 82; B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (London: Oliphants, 1972), 99; Ridderbos, *John*, 59. The former variant is supported by the earliest and more reliable Greek manuscripts. Cf. Carson, *John*, 139; Barrett, *John*, 169; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 15; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:280. For a detailed discussion, see Fennema, "John 1.18": 124–135.

³² Scholars think these are an interpretation of the theophany at Sinai (Exod 33:20). P. Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel," Pages 137–148 in *Religions in Antiquity* (ed. J. Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 145; M. E. Boismard, *St. John's Prologue* (trans. C. Dominicans; London: Blackfriars, 1957), 136–140; J. A. Draper, "Practicing the Presence of God in John: Ritual Use of Scripture and the Eidos Theou in John 5:37," Pages 155–168 in *Orality, Literacy, and Colonialism in Antiquity* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 164.

³³ Hirsch-Luipold, *Sinne*, 27–28.

Knowledge of God is made possible by the incarnation of the Logos who is full of grace and truth. We, as human beings, cannot see God, but his grace and truth have entered into this world and we can perceive those with all our senses.³⁴ John states explicitly that the final revelation of God is made possible only through the incarnate Logos, Jesus the Christ, who is visible and perceptible. How Jesus exegetes God is not made clear here but his role as God's exegete, to manifest God to others through the senses, is further developed in the narrative through his perception of God and the way he says and does what he hears and sees.

1.2. Jesus' Perception of God

John's theology of sense perception is shown in the Prologue through his doctrine of incarnation and his portrayal of Jesus as God's exegete. This interpretation, admittedly, depends on reading the Prologue as an integral part of the Gospel. But even for those scholars who do not consider the Prologue as part of the Gospel,³⁵ this theology of sense perception is underpinned by Jesus' metaphorical use of sense perception to state or describe his perception of the Father.

³⁴ Hirsch-Luipold, "Literatur," 139.

³⁵ Some scholars argue that the Prologue of John is a later addition to a Gospel. This view is largely due to the fact that the Logos only occurs in the Prologue and the Logos doctrine is not found in the rest of the Gospel. See J. A. T. Robinson, "Relation of the Prologue to the Gospel of St John," *New Testament Studies* 9 (1963): 120–129; A. Harnack, "Über das Verhältnis des Prologs des Vierten Evangeliums zum ganzen Werk," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 2 (1892): 189–231; S. Voorwinde, "John's Prologue: Beyond Some Impasses of Twentieth-Century Scholarship," *Westminster Theological Journal* 64 (2002): 15–44, at 19. Carter argues that this view overlooks the 'Prologue's function in relation to the Gospel's socio-historical context.' He identifies four themes in the Prologue: '(1) the origin and destiny of Jesus the logos, (2) Jesus' role as the revealer, (3) responses to Jesus, and (4) the relationship of Jesus the logos to other figures.' He argues that these themes are central to the Gospel and thus he establishes 'a unity and focus between Prologue and Gospel.' W. Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel: Function, Symbol and the Definitive Word," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (1990): 35–58. Besides, many scholars have observed a similarity of style and vocabulary between the Prologue and the rest of the Gospel. Brown, *John*, 1:18–21; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:222–224; Haenchen, *John*, 1: 101–140. As Bultmann (*John*, 13) observes, the 'Logos doctrine' expresses 'the idea of revelation which dominates the whole Gospel.' Jesus' role as God's exegete is the focus of the Gospel. Even though the term 'incarnation' does not occur again in the Gospel, the concept of incarnation is expressed in terms of Jesus seeing and hearing the Father and doing what he sees and hears (John 10:37, 38; 12:45; 14:8–10). The Prologue does in fact provide a fitting articulation of the theology of incarnation that underpins the rest of the gospel and can be seen as part of the Gospel. Cf. Voorwinde, "Prologue": 22; Barrett, *John*, 126; Smalley, *John*, 92–93.

1.2.1. Jesus sees the Father (John 5:19–20, 37; 6:46)

Jesus talks of his perception of the Father in John 5:19–26, where the Sabbath controversy starts. What he says in this section is in response to the charge made against him (John 5:18), that he makes himself equal to God.³⁶ In defence, Jesus answers:

Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees (βλέπει) the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.³⁷ The Father loves the Son and shows (δείκνυσιν) him all that he himself is doing; and he will show (δείξει) him greater works (ἔργα) than these, so that you will be astonished. (John 5:19–20)

Jesus vividly portrays his role as God's exegete through the language of sense perception. Jesus is the mediator through whom people can see God and His work. For John, it is important that people see what Jesus does physically because this reveals God's work. The fact that Jesus uses the present tense of the verb of 'see' and the present and future tenses of 'show' indicates that the act of showing and seeing is a process.³⁸ This process takes place not only in the divine realm but also in the earthly realm.³⁹ God shows Jesus what he needs to know and see, so that Jesus can make what he sees the Father doing perceptible to the people. This is how Jesus fulfills his role as God's exegete.

³⁶ For the concept of 'equality with God' in Greek thought, see Dodd, *Interpretation*, 325–26. This word ἴσος, however, never appears on Jesus' lips.

³⁷ According to Lofthouse, 'the Son does whatever the Father does' is the fundamental doctrine of the relationship between father and son in the Hebrew Bible. W. F. Lofthouse, *The Father and the Son: A Study in Johannine Thought* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1934), 22–24. Dodd, on the other hand, argues that Jesus is using a parable of a son as an apprentice, which is common in the Ancient Near East. C. H. Dodd, "A Hidden Parable in the Fourth Gospel," Pages 30–40 in *More New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), 30–31. This view is accepted by Keener, *John*, 648; Brown, *John*, 1:218; Lee, *Symbolic*, 113; Lindars, *John*, 221. But it is rejected by Beasley-Murray, *John*, 75.

³⁸ Morris, *John*, 313. Brun, thus, argues that this vision of Jesus must refer to the life of Jesus on earth, rather than the life of the pre-existent Jesus. L. Brun, *Die Gottesschau des johanneischen Christus* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1927), 7. But it is not necessary to exclude the vision of the pre-existent Jesus.

³⁹ E. Haenchen, *John* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 250.

Jesus does not state explicitly what he sees or how he ‘sees’ the Father’s work. However, Jesus’ statements in John 5:21–22 reveal some of the perpetual activities ζῳοποιεῖ⁴⁰ and κρίνει⁴¹ of the Father. These are the works that Jesus sees the Father doing and that Jesus does likewise. He ‘gives life to whomsoever he wishes’ (John 5:21) and executes judgment, for the Father ‘has given all judgment to the Son’ (John 5:22).⁴² The terms ‘gives life’ and ‘judges’ are, from the audience’s perspective, *abstractions* when applied to what Jesus perceives of God’s work; they are made concrete only through the narrative of Jesus’ ministry. The audience does not know how Jesus sees God giving life and judging, but they can perceive it in Jesus healing the paralytic despite his sin. Thus in the sense-perceptible events of his ministry, Jesus interprets God’s work to the sense perception of observers. People can never have the direct perception of God that Jesus has but they can physically see what Jesus does. Thus Jesus’ perception of the Father is made sensually perceptible to those who see what Jesus does.

The significance of seeing Jesus physically is based on the fact the he alone has seen the Father, while ‘the Jews’ have ‘never heard (ἀκηκόατε) his voice or seen (ἐώρακάτε) his form’ (John 5:37). The first phrase, ‘you have never heard his voice’ echoes Isaiah 48:8 ‘You have never heard, you have never known,’⁴³ while the second phrase, ‘you have never seen his form’ echoes Deuteronomy 4:12: ‘You heard the sound of words but saw no form.’⁴⁴ To understand what Jesus means, we have to refer to the immediate context of John 5:37. There Jesus emphasises twice that he is sent from God (John 5:36, 38). The contrast is between Jesus who has direct access to God because he has been sent from God and those who are distant from God because they have never seen or heard from God. Their failure to hear God’s voice and to see God’s form is because they do not believe in Jesus (John 5:38).

⁴⁰ The work of ζῳοποιεῖν becomes effective through the hearing of the word (John 5:24). Dodd, *Interpretation*, 318.

⁴¹ Ibid., 322.

⁴² Giving life and judging are two sides of the same process. Jesus gives life to those who believe in him; on those who refuse to believe in him, judgment is made. Ibid., 256.

⁴³ Lincoln, *John*, 207.

⁴⁴ John 5:37: οὐτε φωνὴν αὐτοῦ πρόποτε ἀκηκόατε οὐτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἐώρακάτε
Isaiah 48:7–8: ἡμέραις ἠκουσας αὐτά... οὐτε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ἠνοιξά σου τὰ ὄψα
Deuteronomy 4:12: φωνὴν ῥημάτων ὑμεῖς ἠκούσατε καὶ ὁμοίωμα οὐκ εἶδετε

So far, Jesus' direct vision of God is stated implicitly. It is only in John 6:46 that Jesus states explicitly that he alone has direct vision of God. Jesus says to the Jews:

‘Not that anyone has seen the Father (τὸν πατέρα ἑώρακεν), except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father (οὗτος ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα).’

This statement is closely linked to John 1:18 and 5:37. All three verses affirm that ‘no one has ever seen God,’ but John 6:46 points out the exception: except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. This statement prepares the way in which the characters' and the readers' visions of God are focalised through Jesus. There is a paradox of sense perception. In the narrative, the characters do not actually see God as Jesus does; instead they see Jesus. This is affirmed by Jesus: ‘I said to you that you have seen me (ἑώρακατέ [με]) and yet do not believe’ (John 6:36; cf. 9:37; 14:7). This is a different kind of vision of God from the one that Jesus experiences. It has an inextricable sensory dimension, whereas the way that Jesus sees God is more than what human senses can experience. The readers' vision of God is also focalised through Jesus, but their perception operates on a different level because, unlike the characters, they do not see even Jesus. They see in their mind's eye only what the narrator tells of what Jesus sees, says, smells and does. There is no description of Jesus' physical appearance.

John's statement in John 1:18 and Jesus' own statements in John 5:37 and 6:46 have the same emphasis: no one has ever seen God, except Jesus who makes God known. The revelation of God can be found only in Jesus for he is the only one who has been with God, has been sent by God and has seen God.⁴⁵ The fact that he sees what the Father does and that the Father shows him his work supports John's presentation of Jesus as God's exegete as announced in the Prologue. No one can have direct perception of God. The only way to know God is to see what Jesus does because what he does comes from his direct perception of God. Jesus not only

⁴⁵ C. Traets, "Voir Jésus et le Père en lui, selon L'évangile de Saint Jean" (Ph.D. diss., Libreria editrice dell'Università Gregoriana, 1967), 61; M. J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Jean* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1927), 182; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 167; E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 296.

manifests God to people by doing what he sees in the Father's presence, but also declares what he hears from the Father.

1.2.2. Jesus hears the Father (John 8:26, 40)

Jesus' statement in John 5:37 points out the significance of his perception of God by indicating that no human being has ever seen God or heard God's voice. That Jesus alone has seen God is already emphasised in John 5:19–20 and 6:46. Next John wants to show his readers not only that Jesus alone see God, but also that only Jesus hears God's voice. Therefore, it is only through hearing Jesus' words that one can hear God's words. Jesus' direct hearing of what the Father says is made clear in John 8:26, Jesus says to the Pharisees:

I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard (ἤκουσα) from him.

The Pharisees obviously do not understand that Jesus is speaking about the Father (John 8:27), so Jesus explains further: 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realise that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me' (John 8:28). John 8:26 and 28 point to the same thing: as an exegete of God, Jesus declares only what the Father says to him.⁴⁶ In John 8:40, we find the same emphasis on Jesus' direct hearing of God: 'but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard (ἤκουσα) from God.' This verse points out two important facts. Firstly, what Jesus says is the truth. Secondly, this truth is what he has heard from God. All the verses discussed above point to Jesus' role as mediator. As human beings, we cannot hear God directly as Jesus does, but we – or rather, the characters in the narrative – can hear Jesus' voice as he speaks. God's revelation is made known to the readers through hearing Jesus' words. This kind of hearing by the readers is not the same as hearing Jesus' words with physical sense that is experienced by the characters in the narrative. The readers do not hear the sound of Jesus from his own mouth. But at another level, because

⁴⁶ Cf. John 12:50. For the concept of God's agent in John, see Borgen, "Agent," 137–148.

John's Gospel is a text, the words of Jesus can be made vivid to the readers through another's voice – that of the lector in the liturgy. In John, we do not read God's words in a written form (except John 12:28). The uttered words we read in written form are mostly Jesus' words. This again shows that John emphasises that God's revelation becomes known through the 'hearing' of Jesus' words.

Jesus' assertion that he declares what he hears from the Father has the same importance as his claim that he has seen the Father and his work. Both claims support his role as the exegete of God. The characters and readers are invited to hear God and see God through their perception of Jesus. This is made even clearer in Jesus' statement that seeing him is seeing the Father (John 14:7).

1.2.3. Seeing Jesus is Seeing the Father (John 14:7–11; cf. John 12:45)

That Jesus does what God does and declares what God says makes him the only mediator between God and humanity. Through seeing and hearing Jesus with the physical senses, the perception of God is possible. This theological significance of people's perception of Jesus is made most strongly in Jesus' statement that seeing him is seeing the Father. We examine this claim closely by looking at John 14:7–11.

‘If you know me (ἐγνώκατε), you will know (γνώσεσθε) my Father also. From now on you do know (γινώσκετε) him and have seen (έώρακατε) him.’ Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show (δείξον) us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you have not known (ἔγνωκας) me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father (ὁ έώρακώς έμέ έώρακεν τόν πατέρα). How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

The relationship between sense perception and the knowledge of God has been implied in John 1:18, John 5:19–20 and 6:46 (cf. John 8:26, 38). This is the first time that sense perception and the knowledge of God are directly connected by the juxtaposition of the verbs, γινώσκω and ὁράω. In John 1:18, Jesus is distinguished from those who have never seen God. The implication is that he alone has seen God and thus can make God known. This implication is made clearer in John 6:46, where Jesus' direct perception of God is stated explicitly. In John 5:19–20, Jesus' emphasis is not on his direct vision of God, though this is implied. His emphasis is on showing how he can fulfill his role as God's exegete by doing what he sees the Father doing and what the Father shows him. Again, knowledge of God and sense perception are associated implicitly. When we come to John 14:7–11, this connection is made explicitly. In John 14:7, the subject of γινώσκω and ὁράω is the disciples, and what they know and have seen is the Father. In John 5:19, the subject is Jesus and what he sees is τὸν πατέρα ποιῶντα. We see a shift from an emphasis on what Jesus sees (the Father) to an emphasis on what the disciples see (Jesus).

The theme of sense perception and knowledge is developed and complicated by the misunderstanding of Philip. Despite the fact that Jesus tells Philip that 'you know him and have seen him,' Philip still asks Jesus to show them the Father. He does not understand what Jesus means. Thus Jesus makes it clear that it is through him that they can have a vision of God. Jesus' statement 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14:7) implies that the unseen God is now visible to human perception in the person of Jesus. As discussed earlier, in the Old Testament, God's glory and presence are made visible to human perception in the tabernacle. In John, Jesus becomes the place where the God's glory is 'tabernacled' and the place where the presence of the unseen God is located. Thus the statement that 'seeing Jesus is seeing God' underpins the theological significance of sense perception, as it does in the other verses discussed in this section.

The disciples have in front of them the earthly Jesus whom they can see. However, this vision is not the same as if they could see God directly. Thus their seeing God in Jesus is more than physical sense perception. The readers, meanwhile, do not even physically see Jesus. They have to see Jesus in their mind through the narrator's voice. Only then can they see God through the eyes of faith. God is unseen

for both the characters and the readers. But the characters have the physical perception of Jesus, in whom they can see God. Although the readers do not see Jesus physically, they can share the spiritual insight of the narrator and other privileged witnesses. This will be discussed in our later sections.

Jesus' direct perception of God makes him able to manifest God to others through the senses, for he sees and hears the Father, and then does and says what he sees and hears. When Jesus speaks of 'seeing' and 'hearing' the Father, he uses this language metaphorically. However, when he 'does' what he 'sees' and 'says' what he 'hears', he makes his perception of the Father *sensually* perceptible to human spectators. By choosing to use the language of sense perception metaphorically for his perception of the Father, he draws attention to and accentuates the correspondence between what he makes available to the physical senses for others to see and hear, and what he perceives from the Father. All of these are summarised in his declaration: 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14:9; cf. 12:45). John's development of Jesus' self-presentation of his role as revealer underpins the theological significance of sense-perceptible revelation in John's gospel.

1.3. Jesus' Testimony

Sense perception is significant in revealing God to people and John considers this kind of revelation as 'testimony' to God. This is made explicit when John applies the language of testimony to Jesus' role in revealing God to the senses. By doing so, John emphasises Jesus' role as a privileged witness of God. The language of testimony is used of Jesus in John 2:23–25, where John sets up a contrast between Jesus and everyone else in the matter of testimony (and its relationship to faith). Many people believed in Jesus because they saw Jesus' signs, but Jesus did not 'entrust himself to them because he knew all people, and needed no one to testify about anyone' (John 2:24–25).⁴⁷ This is one of the few occasions when John gives the 'inside view' of Jesus. This statement tells the reader that Jesus sees himself as the true witness of humanity.⁴⁸ This prepares the readers to see Jesus' role as a witness. It

⁴⁷ For the relationship between signs and faith, see Chapter 7, section 1.

⁴⁸ Lincoln, *John*, 145.

is in this denial that Jesus needs anyone to testify to him that we find the language of testimony used for Jesus' own testimony to what he has seen and heard (John 3:11).

The language of testimony alongside that of sense perception is used by Jesus for the first time in his dialogue with Nicodemus in John 3:11, 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak (λαλοῦμεν) of what we know and testify to what we have seen (ὃ ἐώρακάμεν μαρτυροῦμεν); yet you do not receive our testimony (μαρτυρίαν).'⁴⁹ Jesus' statement reminds the reader of the Baptist's testimony about Jesus, 'And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God' (John 1:34). John confirms Jesus' role as witness and says:

He testifies to what he has seen and heard (ὃ ἐώρακεν καὶ ἤκουσεν τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖ), yet no one accepts his testimony (μαρτυρίαν) (John 3:32).⁵⁰

The two verbs of sense perception, ὁράω and ἀκούω, are often used by Jesus to express the knowledge which he has gained with the Father and from the Father (cf. 6:46; 8:26, 40; 15:15; the conjunction in 5:37 refers only indirectly to Jesus' knowledge),⁵¹ but these two verbs are only used together in John 3:32 by the narrator's voice. Here, these verbs are associated with the language of testimony. It is probable that John is referring back to what Jesus says in John 3:3 and 3:12. Unlike those who have not seen the Kingdom of God,⁵² Jesus has seen it and has the ability to see through earthly things (John 3:12), since he has come from above and has experienced heavenly realities (John 3:31).⁵³ Indeed, Jesus' role as divine exegete also

⁴⁹ Some scholars argue that the change from first person singular to first person plural indicates that Jesus represents the witness of a wider group. Lincoln, *Truth*, 66. However, John carefully distinguishes between what the disciples understood during Jesus' ministry and what they understood after Jesus was risen, so it is unlikely that the disciples can be described as speaking of what they know and testifying to what they have seen. Carson, *John*, 198. The best understanding is that Jesus is simply responding to Nicodemus' opening statement, 'we know you are a teacher who has come from God.' Brown, *John*, 1:132.

⁵⁰ Most scholars agree that Jesus is the subject here, see Ridderbos, *John*, 149; Lincoln, *John*, 162; Barrett, *John*, 225. However, Boice states that in this passage, Jesus testifies to the Father, not to himself. Boice, *Witness*, 28. Nevertheless, the context does not suggest this. Also, in John's narratives, all testimonies are concerned with Jesus, so it would be odd to find this exception.

⁵¹ Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:383.

⁵² To see the Kingdom of God is usually understood metaphorically to mean 'to participate in the kingdom at the end of the age, to experience eternal, resurrection life.' Carson, *John*, 188. But one should not overlook the visibility of the Kingdom of God manifested through the person of Jesus.

⁵³ Lincoln, "Eyewitness": 9.

suggests that Jesus has direct perception of God and divine things. Jesus' testimony is based on divine revelation. This is developed later in the Gospel, as has been shown.

The theme of witness is taken up again in John 8:13–18 and is now related to Jesus' role as God's exegete. His privileged status as witness is rooted in his relationship with God. Here the Pharisees question the validity of Jesus' testimony (John 8:13). Jesus says:

Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf. (John 8:14–18)

Jesus knows his origin and where he is going, but 'the Jews' do not. In John 8:23–25, Jesus again brings up the contrast between himself and his opponents. This time, the difference lies in this; they are 'from below' and 'from this world,' while Jesus is 'from above' and 'not of this world' (John 8:23). Finally they ask Jesus explicitly: 'Who are you?' (John 8:25). Jesus does not give them a straight answer. He turns to his direct perception of God. He asserts that he speaks according to what he has heard from the Father (John 8:26, 28, 40) and what he has seen with the Father (John 8:38).⁵⁴ Jesus' perception of God not only supports his role as God's exegete, but also reinforces his role as God's witness. His direct perception of God makes him a qualified and valid witness who can testify to God.

God's words testify to Jesus but this testimony is missed by the opponents of Jesus: they have never heard God's voice, because they do not have God's words abiding in them and do not believe him whom he has sent (John 5:38). Even when the voice of God comes directly from heaven saying, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify

⁵⁴ Von Wahlde, "Witnesses": 393.

it again' (John 12:28), they fail to recognise it and think that it is thunder (John 12:29). This very instance of God's direct communication to people does not lead to their faith in Jesus' words but produces confusion and puzzlement. Jesus makes it clear, 'whoever sees me, sees him who sent me' (John 12:45). Jesus gives access to the voice and the form of God, but the Pharisees do not hear or see him as such.⁵⁵ It is emphasised in the Gospel that people can see God or hear God only in the person of God's emissary, namely, Jesus, for the vision of God desired by human beings is not available otherwise than by seeing Jesus.⁵⁶ He is the 'incarnate Word of God, who speaks, so that God is heard, and in whom they see the Father.'⁵⁷

Jesus can testify to God's revelation in himself because of his perception of the Father. The language of sense perception and testimony are brought together in the development of Jesus' role as the privileged witness. Next, we show how Jesus' perception brings others to Jesus.

1.4. Jesus' Perception of the First Disciples

In the previous sections, we have shown that Jesus' perception of God makes him the privileged witness *par excellence*. Jesus perceives God, and manifests what he perceives in a way that is perceptible to others through the senses. John himself calls that 'testimony.' In this section, we focus on how Jesus' sense perception of people contributes to Jesus' testimony. When Jesus sees and hears others, they are able to come to him and 'see.' Their spiritual insight into Jesus' identity is grounded in their first having been seen by Jesus. Thus John has a coherent view of how and why sense perception contributes to valid testimony about God. Sense perception has a crucial role in people coming to see Jesus. There are different ways for different characters, but John lays weight on Jesus seeing people, and not just on them seeing him. We examine this further by looking at the narrative of Jesus' perception of the disciples in John 1:35–51.

⁵⁵ Moloney, *John*, 187.

⁵⁶ M. M. Thompson, "'God's Voice You Have Never Heard, God's Form You Have Never Seen': The Characterization of God in the Gospel of John," *Semeia* (1993): 177–204, at 194.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 188. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that Jesus and the Father are to be 'conflated.'

There are different ways in which these characters come to Jesus but, as regards each one of them, discipleship is preceded by Jesus seeing or speaking to him. In John 1:35–37, John states that the Baptist sees Jesus, but in John 1:38–39, he emphasises that Jesus turns and sees the disciples. The invitation to the disciples to come to him and see hinges on Jesus turning and looking at them. Andrew tells Simon, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (John 1:41), and brings him to Jesus – Simon does not take the initiative. This is further shown in that, instead of narrating that Simon sees Jesus, John emphasises that Jesus sees and speaks to Simon and bestows on him the name by which he is later known to the church (John 1:42). Jesus initiates the call of Philip without a mediating witness. Jesus finds him and says to him: ‘Follow me’ (John 1:43). Philip then invites Nathanael to ‘come and see (ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε)’ Jesus (John 1:46). Nathanael accepts the invitation and decides to come and see Jesus but John states that Nathanael has already been seen twice by Jesus (John 1:47, 48).⁵⁸

All the disciples who come to Jesus are seen by him (John 1:38, 42, 43, 47, 48). Nathanael in particular is seen by Jesus even before he comes to Jesus. Jesus tells him, ‘I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you’ (John 1:48). This leads to Nathanael’s confession, ‘You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ (John 1:49). John’s narrative of Jesus’ discipleship shows that sense perception is significant, but there is more here than just sense perception. Jesus underpins the significance of sense perception by promising Nathanael that he will have a vision of ‘greater things,’ i.e. ‘you will see (ὄψεσθε) heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man’ (John 1:51). This vision refers to physical sense perception but also to more than that. This promise is fulfilled in the earthly ministry of Jesus, from the moment Jesus starts his ministry to the moment of his crucifixion, which is also the moment of exaltation.⁵⁹ All of these events are sense-perceptible, even though spiritual insight is required to see them. After so much emphasis on the significance of Jesus seeing his disciples, and the partial and ambiguous glimpses of what it is to see Jesus as the ‘Lamb of God’ and Jesus’ invitation to ‘come and see,’ the Testimonium ends with an allusion to Jacob’s dream,

⁵⁸ Collins, *Witness*, 89.

⁵⁹ J. Painter, "Quest Stories in John 1–4," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 13 (1991): 33–70, at 48; Lincoln, *John*, 123; Ridderbos, *John*, 94; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 28.

a full-blown theophany.⁶⁰ This suggests that perceiving Jesus has great theological significance as is discussed more fully in the next section.

Jesus' sense perception, i.e. seeing, of the first disciples ends with a reference to an Old Testament theophany, Jacob's perception of God. This is significant for it connects Jesus' seeing the disciples with their seeing God.

Jesus' allusion to Jacob's dream vision signals a transformation of the Old Testament background in the manifestation of the Johannine Jesus.⁶¹ As we saw in Chapter 4, there are two elements in Jacob's dream that serve the cognitive purpose of the knowledge of God. The first is the imagery of the ladder with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. The ascending and descending of the angels symbolises the two-way communication between heaven and earth. This imagery makes the invisible realm visible. It is seen as the introductory image which leads to the second element of the revelation: the appearance of God. By seeing angels ascending and descending on the ladder, Jacob knows that the Lord is there. In this theophany narrative, there is no description of God's visual appearance. The appearance of YHWH replaces the imagery of the ladder because YHWH is now the bridge between heaven and earth. God is made known to Jacob through his seeing first the ladder, and then the angels ascending and descending and finally through perceiving God standing by him.

Jesus' allusion to Jacob's dream is brief and ambiguous. However, the repetition of 'ascending and descending of the angels' provides a point of comparison. The ladder in Jacob's vision is replaced by the Son of Man, namely Jesus himself and

⁶⁰ The phrase 'the angels ascending and descending' is very similar to what we find in Jacob's ladder in Genesis 28:12, where Jacob saw a ladder and 'the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.'

⁶¹ The link between John 1:51 and Genesis 28:12 had already been recorded in Augustine. Cited by Bernard, *John*, 1:70–71. Most scholars agree with this view. Cf. Ridderbos, *John*, 94; Brown, *John*, 1:90; Barrett, *John*, 186; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:320; Bultmann, *John*, 105; A. T. Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel: A Study of John and the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 73; J. H. Neyrey, "The Jacob Allusions in John 1:51," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44 (1982): 586–605. Kerr, however, argues that there is no reference to ladder, stone or Bethel, just 'the angels ascending and descending,' which is also found in Jacob's dream. Kerr, *Temple*, 165. The allusion to Jacob in John 1:47 and the exact order of 'the angels of God were ascending and descending on it' suggests that John is indeed thinking of Jacob's dream. Koester, "Messianic Exegesis": 24.

there is no mention of God's appearance in Jesus' statement.⁶² This makes Jesus not only the place where the divine and human meet but also the bridge between heaven and earth. In John's Gospel, God is made known to Nathanael (and the believers) through seeing Jesus and seeing the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

But there are differences in the way in which the vision is fulfilled. For Jacob, this vision of God takes place in his dream, which suggests a heightened perception of the divine but is distinct from and beyond the ordinary sensory world. His vision of God is also limited in time. It comes to an end when he wakes up. On the other hand, Nathanael's vision of God takes place in this sensory world and is fulfilled by seeing Jesus and his ministry. In Jacob's vision, there are emphases on physicality in sense perception, i.e. seeing the ladder and seeing the angels ascending and descending. Jesus' allusion, however, does not emphasise physically seeing the angels ascending and descending. Indeed, Jesus' use of *ὁράω* opens up not only the problems of sense perception in John but also the possibility of spiritual insight rooted in the theology of the Old Testament. Jacob really did see angels ascending and descending and God did reveal himself to him. Similarly, the characters in the narrative gain knowledge of God through sense perception. Their perception of God is, however, initiated and grounded in their perception of Jesus.

2. Characters Who 'Saw and Testified' to Jesus

This section moves from Jesus' perception of God to the characters within the narrative who are said to 'see and testify' to Jesus, and who thus model for the readers ideal ways of responding to Jesus' sense-perceptible activities. There are different levels of sense perception within the narrative. Some characters fail to see the significance of Jesus and his work; thus their perception of Jesus is weak and limited. They are discussed in the next chapter. There are, however, two characters who

⁶² The parallel is not between Jacob and the disciples but between Jacob and Jesus. They are each a point of contact between earth and heaven. Cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 28; Brown, *John*, 1:90; F. J. Matera, *New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 219. O'Neill argues that the parallel is between the Son of Man and the stone at Bethel, but the phrase 'the angels of God ascending and descending' is connected to the ladder rather than the stone in Jacob's dream, which makes his interpretation unlikely. J. C. O'Neill, "Son of Man, Stone of Blood (John 1:51)," *Novum Testamentum* 45 (2003): 374–381, at 376–381.

perceive Jesus rightly because of their spiritual insight. They are John the Baptist⁶³ and the Beloved Disciple. They are significant because the Baptist is the first human witness mentioned in the Gospel, while the Beloved Disciple is the last. Furthermore the voice and persona of the narrator and of Jesus at times merge into those of these characters (John 1:14; 3:11; 19:35). The language of testimony and sense perception are used of them in a significant way for it makes the combination paradigmatic for the readers.

In depicting these two figures, John strongly and unambiguously emphasises that sense perception and testimony belong together. John uses this combination on two very significant occasions in Jesus' ministry: his baptism and his crucifixion. These two events mark the beginning and the end of Jesus' ministry. He gives this combination particular weight by linking sense perception and testimony with these two events so as to frame it. We start by looking at how John associates sense perception and testimony with Jesus' baptism, where the Baptist is presented as the witness *par excellence*,⁶⁴ and then look at the crucifixion, where the Beloved Disciple is the important witness.

2.1. The Baptist as a Privileged Witness⁶⁵

The Baptist is presented in a way that distinguishes him from other characters within the narrative. John introduces the Baptist as follows: 'There was a man sent from God, whose name was John' (John 1:6). Within John 1:6, we find a link between the realm of humanity and the realm of divinity.⁶⁶ The Baptist is human but at the same time has been sent by God. The fact that he is sent from God indicates the

⁶³ The Baptist is always identified as John and never given the title 'the Baptist.' But to differentiate him from John the narrator, John the Baptist is always referred to as the Baptist in this dissertation.

⁶⁴ John the Baptist's role as the witness *par excellence* has been discussed by many scholars. Cf. Charles, "Witness"; D. J. MacLeod, "The Witness of John the Baptist to the Word: John 1:6–9," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160 (2003): 305–320; Williams, "Baptist."; C. Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 22–30.

⁶⁵ The word 'privileged,' in contrast to 'non-privileged,' connotes the 'level of authority.' In the Bible, the narrator is usually 'detached and privileged,' as are the divine figures. M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1985), 131.

⁶⁶ Williams, "Baptist," 48.

divine origin of his mission and that this mission is to be accomplished on earth.⁶⁷ The concept of 'sent from God' is used commonly in the Old Testament to refer to a divine mission (cf. Exod 3:10–12; Ezek 2:4; 13:6; Isa 6:8). By claiming that the Baptist is sent from God, John is making a connection between the Baptist and the Old Testament prophets.⁶⁸ Because he has been sent by God like the Old Testament prophets, he possesses the spiritual insight which other characters lack.

The Baptist's role as a privileged witness is emphasised by the extensive use of the vocabulary of testimony which points out his significance. In John 1:7–8, the ἵνα clause is followed by the phrase μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.⁶⁹ In John 1:7, the first ἵνα points out the purpose of the coming of the Baptist while the second ἵνα indicates the purpose of witnessing and implies the aim of the Baptist's testimony: that all might believe (πιστεύσωσιν) through him.⁷⁰ The verb πιστεύω is closely related to μαρτυρέω.⁷¹ This emphasises the function of the Baptist's testimony. It is through him that people can 'see' Jesus and thus have faith in him.

The fuller testimony of the Baptist is recorded in John 1:29–34, where the language of sense perception and testimony are used in combination in a crucial way to emphasise the privileged status of the Baptist as an ideal witness.⁷²

⁶⁷ Keener, *John*, 1:391; Harrison, "John 1:14," 25.

⁶⁸ Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:250.

⁶⁹ John's emphasis on the phrase is conspicuous by its repetition. Some scholars argue that John's statement: 'He was not the light' in John 1:8a is 'directed against an over-estimation of the Baptist.' Ibid., 1:252. Cullmann also proposes 'such an assertion has meaning only if there were people who held that John really was "the light."' Cited by Barrett, *John*, 160. Cf. W. Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 1968), 88. However, since John uses the same phrase μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός in John 1:7 and John 1:8, these two verses should be taken in parallel. It is very plausible that 'He was not the light' is simply another way of emphasising 'he testifies to the light.' Carson (*John*, 121) and Barrett (*John*, 160) also consider that this negative assertion is to prepare the way for John 1:9 rather than that it implies a statement against the Baptist's cult. Repetition is also one of John's literary styles. According to Kierspel's analysis, John's vocabulary is the most restricted of the gospels. That means that in John, we expect repetition. For the statistical figures concerning vocabulary used in each of the four gospels, see L. Kierspel, *The Jews and the World in the Fourth Gospel: Parallelism, Function, and Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 142–143.

⁷⁰ Most scholars understand ἵνα as indicating purpose. However, the result of the Baptist's testimony is made clear in John 1:35–37: for his disciples followed Jesus because of his testimony. Carson, *John*, 1121. The purpose of his testimony is that all later generations might believe through him also. Both explanations are, therefore, implied here.

⁷¹ For the relation between testimony and faith, see Potterie, "Témoignage," 202–208.

⁷² For the characterisation of the Baptist as a witness, see Collins, "John"; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 132–133. Bennema agrees that the Baptist is characterised as a witness, but he argues that the Baptist's role as a witness is multifaceted and often oversimplified. The Baptist's other roles, such as 'baptiser,' 'herald,' 'teacher,' 'best man' and 'lamp' serve to 'clarify and define his role as a witness' Bennema, *Jesus*, 29. Williams agrees with Bennema in considering the complexity of the role of the

The next day he saw (βλέπει) Jesus coming toward him and declared, ‘Behold (ἴδε)!’⁷³ The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!⁷⁴ This is he of whom I said, “After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.” I myself did not know him; but I came baptising with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.’ And John testified (ἐμαρτύρησεν), ‘I saw (τεθέαμαι) the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water said to me, “He on whom you see (ἴδης) the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit.” And I myself have seen (ἐώρακα) and have testified (μεμαρτύρηκα) that this is the Son of God (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ).’ (John 1:29–34)

The extensive use of verbs of sight in such a short passage makes it hard to overlook John’s emphasis on sense perception.⁷⁵ John begins this passage with the statement that the Baptist ‘saw’ (βλέπει) Jesus coming toward him, and the first word that the Baptist speaks after seeing Jesus is ‘Behold (ἴδε)!’ (John 1:29). Through this focalisation we are invited to see or ‘behold’ Jesus through the eyes of the Baptist.⁷⁶ John also invites us to see the descending of the Spirit focalised through the Baptist (John 1:32). This description of the Spirit descending as a dove along with Jesus’ motion towards the Baptist presents a vivid image. John appeals to the persuasive power of sense perception and uses verbs of sight as verbal cues to invite his audience to imagine a scene. By appealing to sense perception, ‘the images of absent things are presented to the mind in such a way that we seem actually to see them with our eyes and have them physically in front of us.’⁷⁷ Therefore when the Baptist uses ‘I saw,’ he is telling his audience that he is visualising the scene and thus is inviting his audience to visualise it. While the readers are imagining these scenes, they know at the same

Baptist, but she criticises him for emphasising mainly the ‘character indicators’ and overlooking the ‘symbiotic relationship’ between John’s ‘character’ and ‘characterisation.’ Williams, “Baptist,” 48.

⁷³ The verb ἴδε occurs 15 times in John’s Gospel. Jesus uses it five times in John 1:47; 5:14; 18:21; 19:26, 27.

⁷⁴ This translation is NKJV.

⁷⁵ Comparable to Cicero’s appeal to sense perception to create ἐνάργεια (see Chapter 5), it is very likely that John uses these verbs of sight to help his audience by creating a picture of the encounter with Jesus which they could see with their mind’s eye, as if they were there hearing the Baptist’s proclamation.

⁷⁶ Williams, “Baptist,” 54.

⁷⁷ Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.2.31.

time that what they are meant to see is not exactly these images but rather what these images signify – ‘the lamb of God’ is scripturally rich and the dove marks out Jesus.

John enhances the Baptist’s role as an authoritative witness by using sense perception and testimony together: ‘John testified (ἐμαρτύρησεν), ‘I have seen (τεθέαμαι) the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove (περιστερά), and it remained on him’ (John 1:32).⁷⁸ John uses the description ὡς περιστεράν to represent the ‘mode of descent’ rather than ‘the form of a bird.’ The mode of descent means that it has ‘an adverbial rather than an adjectival force.’⁷⁹ That means that John visualises the descent of the Spirit. Thus the ‘descending’ and ‘remaining’ accentuate the notion of testimony. In contrast to the Synoptic Gospels, John the Baptist is depicted as the one who sees the Spirit descending and testifies to it. His role as witness to Jesus is made explicit.⁸⁰ Also, the Baptist is the only one, other than Jesus, who has heard God. To further validate that he has heard God, he repeats, in John 1:33, God’s words to him. The revelation of God is given to the Baptist through his sensory experience. No one except him has this sensory experience of seeing the Spirit descending and hearing God’s words. The fact that the Baptist has been sent by God and has a special message from God which no one else shares does not diminish his paradigmatic status. Rather this is probably intended to guarantee his importance as a witness and as a model for others.

The Baptist concludes his testimony in John 1:34. Sense perception and testimony (έώρακα καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα) are again used in combination: ‘And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.’⁸¹ At the beginning of this

⁷⁸ In Jewish literature, the heavenly being is never described as descending as a bird. Thus Dixon argues that ‘the Spirit’s birdlike descent’ is taken from Greek myth. He agrees, however, that the dove alone is an Old Testament image. E. P. Dixon, "Descending Spirit and Descending Gods: A 'Greek' Interpretation of the Spirit's 'Descent as a Dove' in Mark 1:10," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128 (2009): 759–780, at 780. It is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss this issue in detail. We simply note that there is a clear visual emphasis on the descending of the Spirit.

⁷⁹ S. Gero, "Spirit as a Dove at the Baptism of Jesus," *Novum Testamentum* 18 (1976): 17–35, at 17.

⁸⁰ Charles, "Witness": 80.

⁸¹ There is a textual variant for the reading ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. Many scholars hold that the variant ὁ ἐκλεκτὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (attested in P⁵ a* it^{b,c} syr^{c,s} Ambrose) should be preferred because ‘Son’ is a common designation for Jesus in the Gospel, while ‘the Elect One’ is not attested elsewhere in the Gospel. Thus they suggest that the copyists changed the unusual title ὁ ἐκλεκτὸς τοῦ θεοῦ to ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. Cf. Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:305–306; Carson, *John*, 152; Morris, *John*, 133; Brown, *John*, 1:66; Barrett, *John*, 178. However, it can be argued that ὁ υἱὸς was changed to ὁ ἐκλεκτὸς by the copyists because, in the context of baptising with the Holy Spirit, they intended to point to the connection

passage, when the Baptist sees Jesus, he points out Jesus' identity as 'the Lamb of God.' At the end of the passage, he uses sense perception and testimony together to point out Jesus' identity as the Son of God. He becomes the most powerful eyewitness of the identity of Jesus as the Messiah.

The Baptist's testimony 'Jesus is the Son of God' marks the end of his testimony concerning the identity of Jesus. His last words in the Gospel are found in John 3:30, 'He must increase but I must decrease.' His witness abides and continues to be effective (5:32–36; 10:40–42) but, once he has directed people to Jesus, he slips off the stage.⁸² In John 3:32, John summarises the role of the Baptist as a witness by using verbs of both sense perception and testimony. The combination of sense perception and testimony reminds us of the Baptist's own statement in John 1:34. The repetition of this phrase 'see and testify' as the summary of the Baptist's ministry shows that John wants to emphasise the combination of sense perception and testimony.

As discussed earlier, the Baptist is the first human figure and witness mentioned in the Gospel. When the narrator introduces this first witness (John 1:6), he tells his reader only that this person is named John without giving him any epithet, such as 'the Baptist' or 'the Baptiser,' and without trying to distinguish him from the other figure, John the son of Zebedee, because he never mentions this latter John by name.⁸³ Although it is hard to know whether or not it is intentional, the effect for the readers is that John the evangelist may, through the shared name, be embodied in the Baptist's testimony to the light (John 1:7).⁸⁴ The narrator would then tacitly share the Baptist's role as a privileged witness for and to Jesus. The authoritative status of the narrator allows him to set down the testimony of the Baptist and of Jesus and also to provide insight into the testimony of both.⁸⁵

between Jesus and ὁ ἐκλεκτός in Isaiah 42:1. Also, ὁ υἱός is preserved in two important papyri, P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵. It is also in harmony with the theological terminology found in the Gospel. Metzger, *Greek*, 200. Thus it is more likely that 'the Son of God' is the original text because it has better textual attestation and is a usual Johannine term.

⁸² Wink, *Baptist*, 90.

⁸³ MacLeod, "Witness": 308.

⁸⁴ See Chapter 2, note 2.

⁸⁵ Charles, "Witness": 83.

Through focalisation, the readers are able to share the Baptist's perspective. Like the first disciples in the narrative, this is the readers' first encounter with Jesus. It is through the Baptist's sense perception and testimony that the disciples follow Jesus, until Jesus turns and looks at them and invites them to 'come and see.' They model for the readers an ideal response to sense perception and testimony, and the invitation to come, see and stay with Jesus is extended to them too. But the Baptist is also a model for the readers. His role lends prominence to the combination of sense perception and testimony, inviting readers to value that combination and to imitate it.

2.2. The Beloved Disciple as a Privileged Witness

The combination of sense perception and testimony is first used in the account of the Baptist. Then, in John 3:11 and 3:32, as discussed in the previous section, it is used with regard to Jesus.⁸⁶ The last use of this combination is with regard to the Beloved Disciple, who is presented as another privileged witness. It is not only the Baptist who is portrayed as a model of spiritual insight. The Beloved Disciple is also portrayed as one who has spiritual insight and a unique ability to understand and interpret Jesus. Just as Jesus is loved by God (John 15:9), this disciple is loved by Jesus. He appears at several significant moments of Jesus' ministry. He reclines next to Jesus (ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, John 13:23; ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, John 13:25) during the Last Supper, a posture that strongly evokes how the Prologue positions Jesus in relation to the Father (εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς John 1:18).⁸⁷ He is at Jesus' crucifixion with Jesus' mother. John emphasises the fact that Jesus sees them both (John 19:26). The language of sense perception and testimony is used together of his role in John 19:35: 'He who saw this has testified (ὁ ἑώρακὼς μεμαρτύρηκεν) so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.'⁸⁸ The fact that John starts this sentence with ὁ ἑώρακὼς μεμαρτύρηκεν shows that he gives special prominence to sense perception and testimony. This combination is linked to Jesus' crucifixion, which marks the end of his public ministry. The Beloved Disciple's testimony continues after Jesus' death. When Mary Magdalene tells the Beloved Disciple and Simon Peter that Jesus' body has been taken away (John 20:2),

⁸⁶ See above in this chapter at 1.3.

⁸⁷ Sproston, "Witnesses": 44; Collins, "John": 367.

⁸⁸ The one who saw and testified is not given a name but, from the context, John is probably referring to the Beloved Disciple. See Lincoln, "Eyewitness": 13.

they both run to the tomb and the Beloved Disciple goes into the tomb, sees and believes (εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν, John 20:8). Finally, John includes his readers in the claim that ‘we’ know that the testimony of the Beloved Disciple is true (John 21:24). Because of this special status of the Beloved Disciple and his spiritual insight, he becomes a witness of Jesus in a privileged way. John portrays the Beloved Disciple as the crucial witness by using sense perception and testimony together for him and linking it with a climactic moment in Jesus’ ministry.⁸⁹

John’s voice is also embodied in the Beloved Disciple’s testimony in John 19:35, as if he is speaking to the readers. This is shown through the change of focalisation. John starts his statement as an external focaliser, but, at the end of statement, he speaks as if he is the character-bound focaliser directly addressing the reader. This resonates with John 21:24, where John includes his readers in his claim, ‘We know that his testimony is true.’ By using sense perception and testimony together, John emphasises the importance and authenticity of the Beloved Disciple’s testimony.⁹⁰ By taking up his voice, John conveys this ideology to his readers, so that they will give due weight to the testimony of the Beloved Disciple.

2.3. Conclusion

Whereas the previous section shows that Jesus has knowledge of God which he makes perceptible to the senses, so that there is potential theological value to sense perception in John’s gospel, this section shows that John also portrays how that can be translated into true spiritual insight through a few chosen witnesses. John gives special prominence in his narrative to how the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple model insightful perception of Jesus. First, he associates sense perception and testimony and makes that combination crucial through these two figures. In depicting these figures, John emphasises that sense perception and testimony belong together. He gives this combination particular weight by linking it to two key events in Jesus’ ministry, the baptism and the crucifixion of Jesus. Both of these figures are held up as models or authoritative witnesses for the reader and as foils to other characters whose

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ By indicating his source of information, John, as a narrator, is fulfilling a ‘testimonial function’ or ‘a function of attestation.’ G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 207. See also Tolmie, *Jesus*, 55.

insight is much weaker. Secondly, these two figures are portrayed in a way that shows that they have spiritual insight that no other characters have. Thus the ideal of spiritually insightful sense perception as a ground for and context of testimony is given special prominence and authority in the Baptist and in the Beloved Disciple.

3. The Ideology of the Narrator

This section moves from the depiction of sense perception and testimony within the narrative to the way in which John mediates this through his text, so as to make his readers into better witnesses to Jesus. The readers cannot actually see or hear Jesus physically with their senses, but as the next chapter will show, John uses ἐνάργεια as a rhetorical strategy to draw them in, by making the events of Jesus' ministry vivid to their sensory imagination. This chapter seeks to show how such sense perception can have theological significance in John. For the readers, this comes about by the narrative's encouraging of the readers to react differently to different characters' perspectives. This is important because some characters are considered dominant and it is their ideology that the narrator hopes that the readers will share.⁹¹ In John, the most significant dominant characters are, in different ways, Jesus, the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple.

The narrator is usually known as 'external focaliser' because he is external to the story.⁹² As a narrator, he is an observer, who tells the story from a panoramic view, so he possesses more knowledge than the characters within it. He tells the story, gives explanations, provides details and translates terms.⁹³ The ideology of the narrator is usually 'taken as authoritative, and all other ideologies in the text are evaluated from this 'higher' position.'⁹⁴ In John, the narrator's voice is sometimes blended with that of

⁹¹ For studies on different types of Johannine character, see S. A. Hunt et al., *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); C. Bennema, "A Theory of Character in the Fourth Gospel with Reference to Ancient and Modern Literature," *Biblical Interpretation* 17 (2009): 375–421; Conway, "Ambiguity"; Tolmie, "Characterization": 57–75; Collins, "John": 359–369.

⁹² Tolmie, *Jesus*, 176.

⁹³ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 17.

⁹⁴ S. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 81.

the Baptist (John 1:14)⁹⁵ and the Beloved Disciple (John 19:35), the two ideal or model witnesses. It is also embodied in the voice of the ‘we’ of the Johannine community (John 1:14). In this way, John shares the ideology of the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple, so that their ideology becomes the authoritative one that the readers are invited to share. John takes up the voice of the Baptist (at the beginning of the Gospel) and the Beloved Disciple (at the end of the Gospel) when sense perception and testimony, crucially, are used together.

This indicates that the combination of sense perception and testimony modelled by the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple is integral to what the narrator intends the readers’ own response to the text to be. Even where there is no such blurring of narrator’s and characters’ voices, however, the narrator provides an authoritative point of view that emphasises the very combination of sense perception and testimony that he hopes to cultivate in his readers. For example, when the narrator summarises the Baptist’s ministry, he uses sense perception and testimony together: ‘What he has seen and heard (ὃ ἑώρακεν καὶ ἤκουσεν), of that he testifies (μαρτυρεῖ); yet no one accepts his testimony (μαρτυρίαν)’ (John 3:11).

John presents his ideology that ‘the glory of God is revealed in the flesh’ to his reader.⁹⁶ This ideology is evident to the readers but not to characters such as the Pharisees and ‘the Jews,’ because they hold a different ideology.⁹⁷ Therefore they never see God’s glory in Jesus. In presenting his ideology, John has a rhetorical purpose, that is, to persuade the readers to share his point of view and to see that the glory of God can only be seen in the flesh and nowhere else.⁹⁸ The importance of sense perception and testimony is mediated to the readers through the ideological facet of focalisation. The readers are then invited to take this ideology as a norm and evaluate the ideology of other characters against this. The way in which less

⁹⁵ Some scholars argue that the Baptist’s testimony is also ‘embedded within the “we” statements of the present community (1:14–16).’ Williams, “Baptist,” 49; Lincoln, *Truth*, 59–60. This is possible since after the narrator’s statement in John 1:14, the Baptist’s testimony follows immediately. Also since the narrator shares the Baptist’s role as a witnesses in John 1:6–7, it is likely that he also includes the Baptist’s voice in the ‘we’ statement. John, along with the Baptist, joins the testimony of the community and declares his vision of Jesus in the first person plural, ‘we have seen his glory (ἐθεασάμεθα)’ (John 1:14).

⁹⁶ J. L. Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 4.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁹⁸ Bultmann, *John*, 63.

perceptive witnesses interact with this ideology is further developed in the next chapter.

Both the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple are held up as models or authoritative witnesses for the reader and as foils to the other characters whose insight is much weaker. John also emphasises that they have theological insight which helps them to perceive Jesus rightly. The spiritual insight that the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple possess puts them in a privileged position compared with the readers and the other characters within the narrative. This underscores rather than undermines their standing as model and authoritative witnesses.

4. Sense Perception and Spiritual Insight

Our discussion shows that John stands within Old Testament tradition in considering physical sense perception as indispensable to gaining knowledge of God. He draws on this Old Testament theology of God's revelation and refocuses it in Jesus. Jesus is acknowledged in the Prologue as the Word made flesh, and his presentation to the eyes and ears of the human beings, both in himself and in his actions, is sometimes interpreted expressly through Old Testament narratives of theophany and sense perceptible divine revelation (section 1.1 above, and Chapter 7, below). John develops this theology to show how the earthly Jesus manifests God through his sense-perceptible activities. The way that Jesus manifests God is through doing what he sees from God and saying what he hears from God. Thus through seeing what Jesus does and hearing what he says, the knowledge of God becomes possible (section 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 above). John indicates that sensory perception of Jesus can coincide with spiritual perception of the Father in a close way through Jesus' statement in John 14:9: 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (cf. section 1.2.3). In principle, therefore, a vivid sensual encounter with Jesus *can* be received and experienced as a vivid encounter with God. However, to perceive this requires more than physical sense perception alone. The problem arises that the fact that God's work is sensorily perceptible in Jesus does not guarantee that it is spiritually perceived. Therefore, we find that the same sense perceptible events are perceived with diverse levels of spiritual insight by characters within the narrative. The ones who can perceive Jesus rightly, i.e. the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple, are the ones who

possess greater spiritual insight. John emphasises, however, that their spiritual insight is *combined with* their sense perception of Jesus; it is a non-disposable part of their testimony to him (section 2.1 and 2.2). Their spiritual insight into their sensory encounter with Jesus makes them the privileged witnesses and models for the future believers. Therefore, John invites the readers to ‘see’ with these privileged witnesses in order to gain greater spiritual insight into the sensorily vivid events. Through focalization of various characters, John presents different levels of sense perception and the readers are invited to align themselves with the ones who possess spiritual insight, namely, those who perceive God’s activities in Jesus. It is in this sense that a greater sensory vividness is spiritually beneficial and this will be argued more fully in the next two chapters.

Chapter 7: Testimony During Jesus' Public Ministry

In the previous chapter, we discussed how, for John, sense perception is theologically important in attaining knowledge of God. Jesus sees God and in that respect is the sole witness to God. The Baptist and the Beloved Disciple are presented by John as the two privileged witnesses who 'see and testify' to Jesus. Thus they both physically see Jesus and bear testimony to God's revelation in him. They model for the readers the ideal ways of responding to Jesus' words and work. They have spiritual insight which other characters lack. Because of the other characters' lack of spiritual insight, there are misunderstandings, ambiguities, doubts, rejections and ironies throughout the Gospel. Thus, if the readers are to gain spiritual insight, it is important that they share the perception of the narrator, whose voice sometimes blends with those of the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple. In this chapter, we explore the signs and significant events of Jesus' public ministry to show how sense perception contributes to testimony. We first tackle the problem of signs and faith. Then we go through each sign to show how, through the rhetoric of sense perception, the readers are drawn into the narrative. Thirdly, we look into other significant events of Jesus' ministry, which also testify to Jesus, to show how sense perception helps to make these events vivid for the readers. Lastly, we discuss how John's emphasis on sense perception marks the end of Jesus' ministry.

1. Signs¹ and Faith

Some scholars claim that faith based on signs is an inferior or inadequate faith.² This would suggest that John denigrates sense perception and signs. For example, Bultmann refers to John's statement in John 2:23–25 and argues that faith based on signs is not 'trustworthy faith.'³ Jesus' own statements in John 4:48 and John 20:29 are also taken as evidence to support the view that Jesus denigrates faith based on signs. While these statements are taken by some scholars to suggest that faith based on signs is not the best kind of faith,⁴ there are others who argue on the basis of John 20:30–31 that signs evoke faith.⁵ We can also find statements that suggest a positive role of the signs for faith (John 7:31; 10:41; 12:37), so we have a problem since there are both positive and negative statements about signs in relation to faith.

Several scholars have tried to solve this problem through different approaches. Robert Fortna proposes that source- and redaction- criticism can explain the phenomenon. He argues that the positive statements about signs for faith come from a 'Signs Gospel,' which is pre-Johannine, while the negative statements about signs-

¹ There is a debate as to whether the signs of Jesus can be seen as miracles or not. Dodd maintains, 'to the evangelist a σημεῖον is not, in essence, a miraculous act, but a significant act, one which, for the seeing eye and the understanding mind, symbolises eternal realities.' Dodd, *Interpretation*, 90. Schnackenburg (*John*, 1:515), however, understands the signs in the Gospel as Jesus' major miracles: 'The signs are important works of Jesus, performed in the sight of his disciples, miracles, in fact, which of their nature should lead to faith in Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God' and Morris, who defines a sign mainly as 'a miraculous happening that points to some spiritual truth.' L. Morris, *Jesus Is the Christ: Studies in the Theology of John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989), 22. Watson argues that the signs of Jesus must comprehend everything in the Gospel that evokes the faith that 'Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.' F. Watson, "The Gospel of John and New Testament Theology," Pages 248–262 in *The Nature of New Testament Theology: Essays in Honour of Robert Morgan* (eds. C. Rowland and C. M. Tuckett; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 255. John's use of signs is similar to what we find in the Old Testament, where signs often refer to God's miraculous acts. I believe that is how John sees Jesus' signs, namely, the miracles that Jesus performs. Thus, I agree with Schnackenburg's view.

² Bultmann is the proponent of this view, and this is largely due to his Lutheran influence that faith comes from hearing Words. Many scholars agree with him and regard the words be superior to signs. R. A. Culpepper, "The Theology of the Gospel of John," *Review & Expositor* 85 (1988): 417–432, at 426; Koester, "John": 347. But A. Hopkins argues that this view has no basis in the Gospel. A. Hopkins, *A Narratological Approach to the Development of Faith in the Gospel of John* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1992), 249.

³ Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:45.

⁴ Barrett, *John*, 247; Lincoln, *John*, 145; Bultmann, *John*, 696.

⁵ Thompson, "Signs": 63–64; Reinhartz, "Purpose," 54.

faith are John's redaction.⁶ Thus John 4:48 and 20:29 are insertions by John, added to criticise the faith based on signs.⁷ Fortna bases his argument on his assumption that there is another source that John is dependent on, namely, a 'Signs Gospel.' Only the existence of this Gospel can explain why John's view on faith is very different from that of the Synoptics. The problem is that there is no manuscript evidence to support his view. He sees John's faith as a process in which the inferior signs-faith leads to a true faith, but he gives no explanation of what this true faith is.⁸ Adele Reinhartz takes John 20:30–31 as her starting point and argues that this is the key statement to understanding John's view of signs-faith. She argues that although Jesus criticises the quality of the people's faith in John 2:23–24, that does not mean that he regards signs-faith negatively.⁹ She also argues that John 4:48 and John 20:29 are not necessarily to be interpreted as against the positive role of signs for faith because John 20:30–31 states clearly that the signs are intended to evoke faith. Even though most people take John 20:29 as a rebuke of Thomas and thus a denigration of signs-faith, Reinhartz argues that the structure of this verse does not allow this interpretation. She argues that, 'Jesus is contrasting Thomas, who needed to see in order to believe, with others, who do not need to see in order to believe.'¹⁰ She points out a different way of reading John 4:48 and 20:29 when we place them in the context of John 20:30–31. If John wants his readers to base their faith on the signs that he has written, then the faith that is based on signs cannot be called an inferior faith.¹¹

Johns and Miller approach this issue by considering the rhetorical framework of the Gospel and examine passages that suggest that faith based on signs is inadequate (John 2:23–3:21; 4:48; 6:25–51; John 20:24–29). They argue that, considering the juridical framework of the Gospel and its allusions to the Exodus, John 2:23–25, 4:48 and 20:29 do not mean that faith based on signs is inadequate. They conclude that the signs and the works of Jesus are 'witnesses in the strategy of persuading the characters, and ultimately the reader, of Jesus' identity.'¹² The

⁶ R. T. Fortna, "Source and Redaction in the Fourth Gospel's Portrayal of Jesus' Signs," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89 (1970): 151–166.

⁷ Ibid., 162; R. T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 143.

⁸ Fortna, "Source": 163.

⁹ Reinhartz, "Purpose," 56.

¹⁰ Ibid., 63.

¹¹ Ibid., 65.

¹² Johns and Miller, "Signs": 533.

relationship between signs and faith is addressed positively in Thompson's article too. By exploring the meaning of signs and faith in John, she comes to this conclusion: 'Jesus' signs lead to faith when one discerns in them the character of God as life-giving and responds to Jesus as mediating that life.'¹³

The discussion shows that although the interpretations of John 2:23–25, 4:48 and 20:29 are often used to argue against signs having a positive role for faith, this depends on how one approaches these verses. We discuss these difficult passages in later sections of this chapter and the next chapter. It is important, however, as Johns and Miller point out, that we consider this issue within the rhetorical framework of the Gospel and also, as Reinhartz and Thompson suggest, that we take John's purpose statement into consideration.

As argued in Chapter 2, John places his gospel in a juridical context. The relationship of signs and faith, therefore, has to be considered in this context, in which signs are used in courts as evidence in the process of persuasion to a verdict. Therefore, Salier places the Johannine signs in the context of the trial motif and argues that the signs can be regarded as 'palpable proof to decide whether Jesus is guilty or innocent,' but they can also 'offer testimony to the truth of Jesus' claims concerning himself.'¹⁴ Larsen too argues that the signs of Jesus may be used as evidence of Jesus' identity¹⁵ and also as evidence of Jesus' innocence.¹⁶ The signs of Jesus can be seen as testimony to Jesus. Indeed, this is also how Jesus himself sees his work (John 5:36).¹⁷ Signs, then, are seen positively by Jesus. This positive role of signs can be traced back to the Old Testament. John uses the term σημεῖα to invite his readers to compare his use of σημεῖα with the use of σημεῖα in the Old Testament material.

¹³ Thompson, "Signs": 107.

¹⁴ Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 172.

¹⁵ Cf. Johns and Miller, "Signs": 527.

¹⁶ Larsen, although he agrees that the Johannine signs are proofs of Jesus' innocence (e.g. John 5:10–46; 9:13–34), asserts that 'the signs display his identity, being acts of showing.' Larsen, *John*, 116.

¹⁷ Although Jesus does not use σημεῖον in John 5:36, his work includes his signs, so they both testify to him. See Johns and Miller, "Signs": 525–526.

In the Old Testament, σημεῖα are also used as evidence to prove that figures such as Moses and prophets are sent from God. Signs are used to attest to or confirm ‘the authority of a prophetic word or the status of the prophet himself.’¹⁸ Jesus’ signs are comparable to the signs of Moses in several ways.¹⁹ First of all, both Moses and Jesus start their ministry by performing signs. As shown in Chapter 4, Moses performs signs to confirm to Israel that his call is from God (Exod 3:12) and to lead to belief (Exod 4:8) or to strengthen faith (Deut 4:34; 6:22). The signs of Moses also have a rhetorical function to reveal God’s glory; hence, the physicality of the signs is always emphasised.²⁰ The signs of Jesus, who is compared with Moses in other ways in the Fourth Gospel, similarly attest and confirm Jesus’ identity as the one sent from God.²¹ In John, people expect that both the prophet and the Messiah will perform signs to prove their divine commission (cf. John 6:14; 7:31).²² The signs also reveal Jesus’ glory (John 2:11). John affirms that Jesus’ signs serve to strengthen the faith of the believers (John 20:30–31). The signs of Jesus are important elements in John’s Christology.²³

The positive role of the signs in the Old Testament is also shown in that the narratives of signs or miracles are always vivid, so that readers are led to see the scenes in their imagination. Similarly in John, we can also find this vivid narrative of signs that emphasises the appeal to the physical senses.

Thus, by giving the same positive role to signs in his Gospel as is found in the Old Testament, John shows that he values the importance of signs for faith. Sense perception is always emphasised in relation to signs,²⁴ but the diversity of responses

¹⁸ See further in Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 20, 60.

¹⁹ For a comparison between the signs of Moses and the signs of Jesus, see J. Lierman, *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 213–214; Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 20–23.

²⁰ See further in Chapter 4, section 2.

²¹ Köstenberger claims that all of Jesus’ signs are presented as evidence that Jesus is God’s authentic representative (cf. John 5:17–47; 6:25–59; 7:14–24; 9:3–5, 35–41; 11:25–27, 40). A. J. Köstenberger, “The Seventh Johannine Sign: A Study in John’s Christology,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 5 (1995): 87–103, at 94. Cf. Lierman, *Challenging*, 213.

²² Köstenberger, “Sign”: 94.

²³ J. W. Pryor, *John, Evangelist of the Covenant People* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992), 119–120.

²⁴ Cicero notes the inter-relation between signs and senses. He writes in *Inv.* 1.30.48, ‘A sign (*signum*) is something apprehended by one of the senses (*sub sensum*) and indicating something that seems to follow logically as a result of it...and yet needs further evidence (*testimoni*) and corroboration

to the signs is due to the problems and limitations of sense perception. Some characters see the signs and also the significance of the signs, while others do not. Because of different levels of perception, there are different levels of understanding of the signs and thus different responses to the signs. Nevertheless, the signs are integral to the testimony to Jesus. If the signs are understood as the manifestation of God's glory in Jesus, and God can be known through the senses as shown in Chapter 6, then we can argue that sense perception contributes to and enhances testimony in John's Gospel. This can be demonstrated by analysing John's use of ἐνάργεια and focalisation in his narrative.

1.1. Changing Water into Wine²⁵

The first sign that Jesus performs in John is the water transformation miracle.²⁶ It takes place at a wedding in Cana to which Jesus, his mother and his disciples have been invited. The sign occurs after Jesus' promise in John 1:51: 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.' Thus some scholars believe that this promise of the greater vision is fulfilled at the wedding at Cana where Jesus reveals his glory through a sign.²⁷ The first sign is thus seen as a continuation of the 'seeing' events in the first chapter. It has the same purpose that all subsequent signs will have, that is, to reveal God's glory in the person of Jesus.²⁸

Through John's vivid description, the readers can experience the miracle as if they were present in the event. John makes the scene vivid before the readers' eyes through ἐνάργεια. There are two things that John does to achieve ἐνάργεια. Firstly, he creates a pictorial image by providing detail and using action verbs such as 'fill,'

(*confirmationis*).⁷ Translation taken from K. Eden, *Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotelian Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 86.

²⁵ The wine miracle is one of the most popular images of the earliest Christian art. It often shows Jesus pointing to five water vessels and one or two servants or witnesses standing next to Jesus. For the analysis of this miracle in early Christian art, see R. M. Jensen, "The Gospel of John in Early Christian Art," in *Edinburgh Companion to the Bible and the Arts* (ed. S. Prickett; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming), 8–12. This page reference is according to Robin Jensen's manuscript.

²⁶ The first sign that Moses performed is also a water transformation miracle (Exod 7:20).

²⁷ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 31; Parnsenios, *Rhetoric*, 110; Hirsch-Luipold, *Sinne*, 94; S. S. Kim, "The Significance of Jesus' First Sign-Miracle in John," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 167 (2010): 201–215, at 212.

²⁸ Brown, *John*, 1:103–104; Kim, "Jesus": 205–206.

‘draw’ and ‘take.’²⁹ In John 2:7, Jesus tells the servants ‘Fill the jars with water.’ This action is described by the narrator with further detail, ‘And they filled them up to the brim.’ Then Jesus said to the servants, ‘Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.’ The action verbs in these dialogues are to make the scene vividly real before his readers as if they can see the servants filling the water and drawing the water out.³⁰ Secondly, John creates a climax. After describing the actions of filling the jars and drawing the water out of the jar, John has the steward taste the wine (John 2:9). The verb γεύομαι is the only sensory verb used in this wine miracle. It may be seen as an element of the narrative that would be a usual and obvious choice, but it is likely that John wants to emphasise the sense of taste. Either way, the mention of the action of tasting is indispensable. If John does not show that the wine was tasted, how can readers be persuaded that Jesus really turned water into wine? Thus the act of taste is essential and significant in this miracle of turning water into wine. After the water was changed into wine, the colour and odour would be different but it would be difficult to judge whether the water had indeed turned into wine simply by its smell or appearance. The only way to verify it would be by taste.

The steward is the first one to taste the wine.³¹ The tasting of the wine ‘was intended to substantiate the truth of what had taken place.’³² Therefore, even though John does not describe how the miracle happened, it is verified, vividly, by the conduct of the steward.³³ His words to the bridegroom, ‘you have kept the good wine until now’ show that the water was indeed turned into wine and leave no doubt as to the quality of the wine.³⁴ His words thus confirm that a miracle has taken place.³⁵ Although the readers were not there to taste the wine, the focalisation through the steward, with emphasis on his sense perception, helps them to imagine the scene as if they could taste the excellent wine and so had experienced the miracle for themselves.

²⁹ For ways of achieving ἐνάργεια in Greco-Roman rhetoric, see the discussion in Chapter 5.

³⁰ Cicero also includes conversations in his defence to make scenes vivid. Cf. Cicero, *Verr. I*, 1.7.19. Jensen observes that John makes his narrative ‘vivid and even theatrical’ by adding dialogues. It is indeed these detailed and vivid narratives that make the Johannine miracles and stories the most illustrated images in early Christian art. Jensen, “Christian Art,” 6.

³¹ As Toussaint says, the steward would be the most qualified person to judge the quality of the wine. S. D. Toussaint, “Significance of the First Sign in John's Gospel,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 134 (1977): 45–51, at 49.

³² Barrett, *John*, 193.

³³ E. Haenchen, *John* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 1:174; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:333; Schnelle, *Antidocetic*, 166.

³⁴ Morris, *John*, 185.

³⁵ Lincoln, *John*, 130; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 33.

Thus, by using ἐνάργεια, John brings the event vividly to life before the eyes of his readers and draws the readers into the narrative.

Through the change of internal focaliser, the readers are directed to focus on three characters: the mother of Jesus, Jesus and the steward. The voices of the servants and the bridegroom are never heard. Jesus' mother is the one who finds out that the wine has given out and she turns to Jesus for help. Even though Jesus does not respond positively, she believes that he has the ability to solve this problem. The steward is the one who validates the quality of the wine. He tastes the wine but does not know where it comes from. Both the servants and the steward are witnesses to Jesus' wine miracle. The servants witness Jesus changing the water into the wine, but they do not verify that the water that they drew has really turned into wine. It is the steward who validates the quality of the wine by tasting it but, ironically, he does not know that it is Jesus who has turned the water into wine. Both the servants and the steward experience the miracle through their senses but they fail to perceive Jesus' miraculous power because they lack spiritual insight. In contrast, the disciples of Jesus not only experience the miracle through their senses but also have the spiritual insight to see that Jesus is not merely an ordinary man. Therefore, when they witness the miracle, they can interpret this miracle in a deeper sense which leads to, or strengthens, their faith in Jesus.

Within the narrative, we see several levels of sense perception operating: the physical sense perception of the sign which all the characters experience, either by seeing or tasting, and the spiritual sense perception which points to God's glory manifested in Jesus. But only Jesus' disciples go beyond the realm of physical sense perception and grasp the spiritual perception of the sign: they see the glory of Jesus and thus believe in Jesus. In the Gospel, φανερόω occurs several times (John 1:31; 3:21; 7:4; 9:3; 17:6; 21:1, 14), and is closely associated with Jesus' revelation of God,³⁶ but it is used with δόξα only in this verse.³⁷ This verb has the particular connotation of empirical manifestation which is sense-perceptible and is used in a

³⁶ Moloney, *John*, 73; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:335–337.

³⁷ This usage recalls the revelation of the glory of God manifested 'on the third day' at Sinai (Exod 19:16). For the connection between the manifestation of God at Sinai and this passage, see B. Olsson, *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel: A Text-Linguistic Analysis of John 2:1–11 and 4:1–42* (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), 69–73.

religious sense in Greek tradition to refer to the epiphany of gods.³⁸ The verb φανερόω is used of Jesus' disciples believing in him because they have witnessed the miracle through sense perception. Their believing is primarily based on the fact that they see that Jesus changed the water into wine. In some sense, they have a 'live narrative' of how this miracle happened in front of their eyes. The servants are in the same position. They are participants in this miracle but do not have what the disciples have, faith in Jesus. This faith comes from the disciples' perception of Jesus and their knowledge of Jesus (John 1:36, 39, 46, 51).

The readers are thus in a position similar to that of the disciples. They already possess some knowledge of and faith in Jesus. Even though they are not present at the scene, they have the narrative of what happened at the scene in front of them. But their post-Easter knowledge puts them in a better position than the disciples and the other characters. Unlike the steward in the narrative, who tastes the wine physically, the readers taste the wine through the focalisation of the steward in their imagination. Their sense perception operates on a different level. Although the readers cannot experience the sign through their physical senses, they have spiritual insight to see into the sign. As the previous chapter emphasises, the theological significance of sense perception is rooted in Old Testament tradition. This and John's theology of incarnation, and the combination of sight and testimony modelled by the Baptist, all help to imbue the readers with spiritual insight to perceive the significance of Jesus' signs. This is the first time in John in which the readers are invited to view a sign in their imagination. It is, of course, a different kind of seeing as compared with what they saw in John 1, but John 1 has urged them to encounter God through what they *see* in Jesus (e.g. John 1:14; John 1:29; 1:50–51); so by now the readers should be attuned to theological significance in what they see. They possess more spiritual insight than the characters, but their spiritual insight is also limited. What they perceive is only what the narrator tells them.

John uses two significant terms, 'glory' and 'the hour' in this first account of a sign. These two terms have theological significance, but the characters (and first time readers) cannot grasp their significance at this stage. The term δόξα in John refers to

³⁸ Cf. M. Bockmuehl, "Das Verb Phaneroō im Neuen Testament: Versuch Einer Neuauswertung," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 32 (1988): 87–99, at 90.

God's character, majesty and power and is also linked with Jesus' death.³⁹ It is often used together with the sense of sight (John 1:14, 11:40; 12:41; 17:24).⁴⁰ It is particularly significant that this term is associated with σημεῖον for it tells the reader how to interpret the sign at Cana and the other signs. The signs of Jesus are related to John 1:14 and 1:18: Jesus, as God's exegete, makes God known to others through his signs which manifest his glory and this glory is seen by the believing community.

From John 1, the readers know that this 'glory' is what the believing community has seen. It is the glory of the Father's only son, which is associated with God's glory present in the Tabernacle.⁴¹ In John 2, this glory is a manifestation of Jesus' miraculous power. The readers can perceive his glory when they see it in the abundant blessings, but they do not yet know how John is going to develop this term, and associate it with Jesus' crucifixion. Similarly, readers may be able to spot the significance of Jesus' reference to 'my hour,' because they have more insight than the characters. They will not be able at this stage, however, to connect Jesus' hour with Jesus' death. It is when the narrative develops (John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23) that they will learn that this hour is related to Jesus' death, resurrection and glorification. They can only grasp the theological significance when John unfolds it. John knows that they do not grasp its full meaning but, nevertheless, chooses to associate these theologically significant words with events of sense perception that are only partially understood by the characters within the narrative. He expects that those who reread and meditate upon the gospel will be drawn into the narrative by sense perception and ἐνάργεια and will hear the much deeper resonances of the language in which he frames it. Thus when these readers ponder the revelation of the 'glory,' and 'the hour,' they will know that John is saying something significant and is focalising it through the characters' sensory perceptions of the miracle.

The wine miracle ends with a positive statement regarding the relation between signs and faith: 'Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him' (John 2:11). If we consider John

³⁹ G. B. Caird, "The Glory of God in the Fourth Gospel: An Exercise in Biblical Semantics," *New Testament Studies* 15 (1969): 265–277, at 269.

⁴⁰ The visibility of God's glory has already been mentioned in Jewish literature, e.g. in Exod 16:7; Num 16:42; Isa 66:18; Pss Sol 17:31.

⁴¹ See Chapter 6, section 1.

2:11 together with John's statement in John 2:23: 'many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing' (John 2:23), the use of the plural σημεῖα suggests that Jesus performed many other signs after the wine miracle.⁴² Both passages suggest that signs lead to faith. However, immediately after John 2:23, we read:

But Jesus on his part would not entrust (ἐπίστευεν) himself to them, because he knew (γινώσκειν) all people and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew (ἐγίνωσκεν) what was in everyone. (John 2:24–25)

Based on this passage, some scholars argue that Jesus rebukes a so-called 'signs faith' as an unsatisfactory type of faith.⁴³ If this is true, and if Jesus denigrates faith based on signs, then why does he perform so many other signs after the first sign? Indeed, the reason that Jesus does not trust them is not because their faith is based on signs but because 'he knew all people and needed no one to testify about anyone.' Jesus declares himself to be not only a witness who can testify to God but also a witness who can testify to humanity.⁴⁴ But because Jesus' statement follows immediately the statement about signs and faith, the issue has to be tackled.

First, we take note of the nature of John 2:23 and John 2:24–25. John 2:23 is a statement of the narrator's observation, while John 2:24–25 is the 'inside view' of Jesus. This thought of Jesus is revealed only to the readers, not to the characters. As shown in Chapter 6, Jesus is represented as the most authoritative witness of God, through whom the readers can gain spiritual insight. In John 2:24–25, through internal focalisation, namely, providing the 'inside view' of Jesus, John presents to the readers his ideology that Jesus is the witness *par excellence* who needs no one to testify about anyone. The readers are thus encouraged to share this ideology and to use this to evaluate the ideology of other characters.

⁴² Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 53.

⁴³ Lincoln, *John*, 145; Bultmann, *John*, 207–209; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:571; Koester, "John": 332.

⁴⁴ Lincoln, *John*, 145.

Throughout the Gospel, what Jesus is really concerned about is not ‘signs and faith’ but ‘faith.’ Indeed, this is also John’s concern as his purpose statement shows (John 20:30–31). As discussed in Chapter 2, ‘faith’ in John is dynamic, that is, faith is a continuous process. There is no perfect faith or mature faith portrayed within John’s Gospel. The concept of ‘signs faith’ would be foreign to John as well. Whether people believe through hearing Jesus’ words or seeing Jesus’ signs or upon others’ testimony, their faith is constantly challenged by Jesus.⁴⁵ What Jesus is concerned with is not how people come to faith but the content of their faith.

In the Gospel, we see people struggling to believe in Jesus because they cannot grasp what Jesus really means. They do not understand Jesus when he speaks about heavenly things and the Father (cf. John 3:12; 6:60; 8:27) and about the knowledge of God (John 14). It is because of their instability to perceive God’s revelation that Jesus does not entrust himself to those who believe because they saw his signs.⁴⁶ Thus the problem does not reside in the faith that is based on signs, but in the ‘perceiver of the sign.’ This inability of humanity inclines Jesus not to entrust himself to people.⁴⁷ This explanation fits the overall context of the Gospel well and invites the readers to contemplate what faith means as they read it.

1.2. Healing the Official’s Son

The second miracle is recorded in John 4:46–54.⁴⁸ The second sign that Jesus performs is again in Cana, although the official’s son is in Capernaum.⁴⁹ John

⁴⁵ Johns and Miller, "Signs": 530.

⁴⁶ Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 53.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Scholars have been puzzled by the fact that only the first two signs are numbered. One explanation offered is that John is alluding to Moses’ three part strategy in Exodus 4:8–10, which would mean that the water and blood pouring from Jesus’ side in John 19:34 is treated as a miraculous event. The reason for that is that John shows special concern for reinforcing the validity of the testimony of this event (19:35); see Johns and Miller, "Signs": 527. It is also suggested that the numbering of the two signs is to ‘constitute two “witnesses” to the person of Jesus.’ Cf. Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 61.

⁴⁹ For similarities between the two Cana signs, see T. L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 226–227; F. J. Moloney, "From Cana to Cana (John 2:1–4:54) and the Fourth Evangelist's Concept of Correct (and Incorrect) Faith," Pages 185–213 in *Studia Biblica* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980); Brown, *John*, 1:194–195.

purposely reminds his readers about the previous signs done in Cana⁵⁰ and this indicates that he wants the readers to connect this sign with the first sign in Cana.⁵¹ Because John numbers only the wine miracle and this healing sign and indicates that both signs took place in Cana, it is best to understand these two signs in Cana as an *inclusio* encircling the text that runs from John 2:1 to John 4:54.⁵²

The narrator introduces the royal official with information that he has a son lying ill, dying, in Capernaum (John 4:46). When he hears that Jesus has come to Galilee, he goes and begs him to heal his son (John 4:47). But Jesus replies to him with a perplexing statement: ‘Unless you see signs and wonders (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα)⁵³ you will not believe.’ There is no description of the royal official having seen any signs in the narrative, but only that he had heard about Jesus’ coming.⁵⁴ It might be assumed that his coming to Jesus was based on what he had heard from the Galileans who had seen (έωρακότες) the wonders that Jesus had done in Jerusalem (John 4:45).⁵⁵

Jesus’ response to the official is regarded by some scholars as a reason to downplay the significance of sense perception or is seen as a criticism by Jesus of the faith based on signs.⁵⁶ This is partly because of the statement in John 2:23–25, which is taken by some scholars as a denigration of signs-faith and partly because the signs are considered symbolically. Bultmann and Fortna are the proponents of this latter

⁵⁰ Scholars usually see this passage as the final episode in the journey from Cana to Cana, and thus see John 2:1–4:54 as a complete unit. Moloney, *John*, 151. However, Beasley-Murray (*John*, 67) connects it with the healing at the pool in John 5:1–9 and thinks that these two healing miracles are put together to introduce the discourse of John 5:17–47. While Moloney asserts that a reader should not read in chiasms, but move from episode to episode, so that the author’s use of the technique of repetition can be recognised at the end, Kierspel rejects Moloney’s view and argues that John 2–4 should be read as a chiasm. For evidence to support seeing both Cana-miracles as an *inclusio*, see L. Kierspel, “Dematerializing’ Religion: Reading John 2-4 as a Chiasm,” *Biblica* 89 (2008): 526–554, at 537–538; Carson, *John*, 237.

⁵¹ See Hirsch-Luipold, *Sinne*, 97.

⁵² Some scholars argue that this sign should be read together with the next healing miracle in chapter five. Cf. Koester, “John”: 337; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 319. However, even though they are both healing miracles, they have little in common.

⁵³ The term τέρατα is used only once in John but one finds a parallel to this verse in LXX Exod 7:3–4. This phrase is used in Acts 2:22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 7:36; 8:13; 14:3; in Paul’s epistles, in Rom 15:19, 2 Cor 12:12, and 2 Thess 2:9; and once in Hebr 2:4.

⁵⁴ Koester, *Symbolism*, 51. Salier argues that the royal official comes to Jesus ‘based on what he has seen himself, or heard about, happening in Jerusalem.’ Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 58. However, John neither states explicitly nor implies that the official has seen the signs of Jesus.

⁵⁵ Moloney, *John*, 153; Koester, *Symbolism*, 89.

⁵⁶ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 141; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:466. For a discussion on signs and faith, see Brodie, *John*, 229; Keener, *John*, 1:276–279.

view. For Bultmann, Johannine signs are just ‘pictures, symbols.’ The signs of Jesus have symbolic meaning either in a general sense, pointing to the revealer’s work, or in a specific sense, representing ‘the Revelation as food (John 6:1–15), light (John 9:1–7) and life (John 11:1–44).’⁵⁷ Fortna, similarly, argues that John assigns a symbolic role to the signs, in contrast to the Signs Gospel, where signs have no symbolic meanings.⁵⁸ He then reaches the conclusion that Jesus’ signs point beyond themselves. They were ‘the deeds of Jesus, and showed who he is. In short, they were signs of his messiahship.’⁵⁹

Based on his view of signs and faith, Bultmann then argues that by placing this statement on the lips of Jesus, John may be thinking of cases which suggest that σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα can evoke faith, such as Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:4; Acts 4:30; 5:12; 6:8.⁶⁰ Also, John wants to ‘correct the naïve faith in miracles’ such as the one found in the Synoptic tradition.⁶¹ However, it is hard to prove that John was thinking to refute a missionary practice that emphasised signs and wonders. One needs to interpret Jesus’ statement carefully in the context before taking it as a rebuke of faith based on signs.

We look first at the background of the phrase σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα. In the Hebrew Scriptures, this phrase occurs mostly in Deuteronomy but also appears in Exodus and Isaiah.⁶² Most of these occurrences refer to the Exodus miracles. In Exodus, God says to Moses that he will multiply his signs and wonders in the land of Egypt (Exod 7:3). In Deuteronomy, the Israelites are constantly reminded of the signs and wonders that God has performed before their eyes in the land of Egypt. For example, Moses reminds them, ‘The Lord displayed before our eyes great and awesome signs and wonders (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα) against Egypt, against Pharaoh and

⁵⁷ Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:44. While Bultmann maintains that genuine faith must not be aroused by signs, Käsemann argues that signs not only symbolise the revelation of glory, they are an indispensable part of it. E. Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17* (London: SCM, 1968), 21–23, 52–53.

⁵⁸ Fortna, "Source": 152.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁶⁰ Bultmann, *John*, 207.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² In Hebrew, the corresponding terms are *אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים*. Cf. Exod 7:3, 9, 11:9, 10; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 13:2, 3; 26:8; 28:46; 29:3; 34:11; Jer 32:20, 21; Neh 9:10; Isa 8:18; 20:3; Ps 78:43; 104:27; 134:9. In Exodus 7:9 and 11:9–10, only *מוֹפְתִים* is used, but in LXX, the translator still translates it as σημεῖον ἢ τέρας. This shows that this idiom is commonly understood to refer to God’s miraculous acts.

all his household' (Deut 6:22), and again in Deuteronomy 26:8: 'The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα).' These events are significant for the Israelites because they reveal the power and the true nature of God and so references to these signs and wonders of God are repeated over and over again.⁶³ The signs and wonders are God's revelation of himself; without them, no knowledge of God is possible in the pre-exilic history.⁶⁴

In the Hebrew Scriptures, seeing 'signs and wonders' is expected to bring people to grasp the truth that Yahweh is the Lord (Deut 4:34–35), although at times God also expresses his frustration that belief has not followed after his people have seen signs and wonders (Num 14:11).⁶⁵ Isaiah even states that this unbelief is intended (Isa 6:10; 53:1) in order to bring out God's judgment. Thus signs and wonders are always seen positively because they reveal God's power and glory. They should have a positive role in evoking faith, even if they may fail to do so. The reasons that they fail are God's hardening of hearts and the spiritual blindness and deafness of the people, as mentioned in Chapter 4, section 6.1.

In John, we see the same theology of signs and wonders relocated in Jesus' signs. Signs are seen as the revelation of Jesus' power and nature and they are expected to evoke faith in Jesus. They have the same significance in the Gospel of John as in the Old Testament. Just as in the Old Testament, signs sometimes fall short of evoking faith, so the same thing happens in Jesus' ministry. John says, 'Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him' (John 12:37). Thus John also assumes that signs should have a positive role in evoking faith, even if they fail to do so. John gives us the reasons that they fail. He quotes Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 to explain that people's unbelief is already predicted in scripture and that this unbelief is intended, so that judgment will take place (John 9:39–41).⁶⁶ All this suggests that John's view of signs is rooted in the Old Testament, where signs

⁶³ See further in McCasland, "Signs": 149–152.

⁶⁴ P. Ciholas, "The Socratic and Johannine Sēmeion as Divine Manifestation," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 9 (1982): 251–265, at 257.

⁶⁵ Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 57.

⁶⁶ Evans, *Isaiah*, 134. See also, C. A. Evans, "The Function of Isaiah 6: 9–10 in Mark and John," *Novum Testamentum* 24 (1982): 124–138.

and wonders are always regarded as significant in understanding God and are regarded positively in leading to faith.

There is no evidence indicating that the official himself has seen the signs, so it is unlikely that Jesus is rebuking him. In addition to that, the plural ἴδτε indicates that Jesus is addressing a group of people and this makes this statement general. The grammatical construction when compared with similar constructions in the Gospel (John 3:3, 5; 13:8; 4:14; 6:35; 8:51, 52; 11:26; 18:11) also suggests that this is not a rebuke, but only a statement of fact.⁶⁷ Jesus' reply does not turn the nobleman away. He repeats his request and Jesus grants his request and heals his son.

Even though there is no emphasis on the senses, the narrative of the second sign is made vivid to the readers through the recounting of the dialogue. In the narrative, we read the dialogues between Jesus and the nobleman and between the nobleman and the servants. These dialogues create a sense of immediacy. Secondly, John enhances the vividness by repetition and providing detail. Jesus tells the man, 'Go, your son (ὁ υἱός) will live' (John 4:50) and this is repeated in John 4:53 and with variation in John 4:51, 'his child (ὁ παῖς) was alive.' John restates the fact that the boy has recovered through close verbal links (ζῶω) and similar nouns, ὁ υἱός and ὁ παῖς. John not only gives the information that the child lived, but also the specific hour, when he tells us that it was 'yesterday at one in the afternoon' that the fever left the child (John 4:52) and that this was the hour when Jesus had said to the man, 'Your son will live' (John 4:53). Through repetition and detail, John makes this healing story, which happens in a town where Jesus is not physically present, vivid to his readers. Thirdly, through creating climax by gradual narration and repetition, the readers are drawn to the narrative and are emotionally moved. We are first told about 'a royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum' (John 4:46). But then we are told that this boy was in a worse situation, 'he was at the point of death' (John 4:47). This fact is repeated again on the lips of the father, who begs Jesus urgently, 'Sir, come down before my little boy dies' (John 4:49). After three different ways of describing

⁶⁷ For detailed discussion, see Johns and Miller, "Signs": 530; Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 58. Bonney argues that because the official repeats his request, he must understand Jesus' words as a rebuke. W. Bonney, *Caused to Believe: The Doubting Thomas Story at the Climax of John's Christological Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 24. However, this is hard to prove. Besides, it is likely that the official repeats his request to show his urgency or it is simply a style that John uses to create emotional impact as next sections show.

the deadly situation of the boy, finally, John lets the readers hear Jesus' response, 'Go; your son will live' (John 4:50), so they can feel the relief that the man would feel. By narrating the situation of the boy gradually and repeatedly, John creates a sense of urgency, which has emotional effect on the readers. Fourthly, we also see contrast and the description of sudden actions, 'die' and 'live.' The first part of the narrative focuses on the deadly situation of the child, where the verb ἀποθνήσκειν (John 4:47, 49) is repeated twice, while the second half of the narrative focuses on the verb ζάω (John 4:50, 51, 53). Through these techniques of achieving ἐνάργεια, the readers are able to align themselves with the characters and feel their emotion.

In this miracle, the readers are directed to focus on the servants. They know nothing about Jesus and what Jesus has done, but their role is significant. Just as, in the wine miracle, the steward validates that the water has really turned into wine, the servants in this sign are the ones who validate that Jesus has healed the man's son. They witness their master's son suddenly recovering and they can speak to the exact hour when the boy recovered (John 4:52). However, at that time, they did not yet know that it was Jesus who had made him well. But, because of the information the servants provide, the man is able to confirm that that was the hour when Jesus said to him, 'Your son will live' (John 4:50, 53). When the nobleman and the servants share their bits of information and put the picture together, they know that it was Jesus who healed the dying boy. This complete knowledge about Jesus leads the nobleman and his household to believe in Jesus.

1.3. Healing the Paralysed Man⁶⁸

Unlike the first two miracles, this miracle is not labelled a 'sign.' However, it falls into the same category as those events explicitly called signs because it also reveals Jesus' miraculous power and points to his messiahship. John also calls the events of healing by Jesus 'signs' (John 6:2). This miracle is considered an ἔργον of

⁶⁸ In John's narrative, the healing of the paralysed man immediately follows the second sign and takes place in Jerusalem. Some scholars connect these two signs, since they are both healing miracles. Thompson, "Signs": 99. Although the second sign is sometimes connected to the healing at the pool, since they are both healing miracles, the nature and results of these two signs are very different. The healing at the pool leads not to faith but to accusations against Jesus. This sign at the pool inaugurates a series of confrontations between Jesus and 'the Jews' and from then on, each sign of Jesus leads to a monologue in which he defends his teaching and identity.

Jesus (John 5:19–30) and Jesus himself refers back to this work, which shows that he considers it to be a significant event (John 7:23–24). Although the meanings of ἔργα and σημεῖα are not identical, there is some overlap. The σημεῖα of Jesus are included in the ἔργα of Jesus.⁶⁹

The account of the healing is recorded in John 5:2–9. The readers are given a vivid narrative presentation of the scene through the technique of ἐνάργεια. First, John starts his narrative by providing the name of the place and the particular features of the pool. We are told that the pool is by the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem and that it has five porticoes (John 5:2). This narrative detail helps the readers to imagine the setting of the pool even though they have not physically seen it. Secondly, John provides details to draw the readers in. He tells the readers that many invalids lay by the pool; not only that, he gives different types of invalids, the blind, the lame, and the paralysed. He starts, perhaps intentionally, with the invalids with most mobility and moves to the ones with least mobility. Thirdly, the repetition of the sick man's status not only makes the scene vivid but also stirs the readers' emotions. John says that this man has been ill for thirty-eight years (John 5:5). This is repeated in a statement which reveals Jesus' knowledge, 'When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time' (John 5:6). These repetitive statements help to trigger the readers' emotions and sympathy for the man. Fourthly, the dialogue between Jesus and the man also makes the scene vivid and helps to arouse emotion. Jesus asks him, 'Do you want to be made well?' (John 5:6) The sick man does not answer Jesus' question but tells him about his unfortunate situation (John 5:7). He describes in detail that 'when the water is stirred up,' he has no one to put him into the pool, but when he is making his way, someone else steps down ahead of him. By focalising the situation of suffering through the sufferer, the readers can sympathise with his helpless and hopeless state. This increases the emotional impact on the readers. Fifthly, there is contrast and sudden action that make the scene vivid. At the start of the narrative, the readers are told that the man has been ill and lain (κατάκειμενον) there for thirty-eight years (John 5:5, 6), but when Jesus said to him, 'Stand up. Take your mat and walk' (John 5:8), we are told that 'at once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.' This sudden and dramatic physical reversal creates a pictorial

⁶⁹ Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 81.

picture for the reader as if they can see the sudden change of state of this man. Finally, John does not mention every action, but only particular actions, such as ‘stand up (ἐγείρω),’ ‘take (αἶρω)’ and ‘walk (περιπατέω).’ These actions are nothing special if they are used of regular able-bodied people but are quite remarkable and dramatic when used of one paralysed for so long. The fact that these action verbs are used on the lips of Jesus and then repeated again by the narrator to describe the action of the sick man creates a vivid image for the readers and involves them emotionally. Most of the techniques that John uses to create vividness such as providing detail, repetition, contrast and sudden actions, are literary devices which we see the rhetors using to create ἐνέργεια in the Graeco-Roman sources discussed in Chapter 5.

In the first two signs, there are some characters within the narrative who validate the signs but, in this miracle, the readers are dependent on the narrator since there are no other witnesses mentioned. It is through the narrator’s perspective that they know that the man was made well and walked. Here, the readers have two characters in front of them: the sick man and Jesus. The readers are left with a choice as to whose voice they will align themselves with before they continue reading. Since Jesus and the narrator are the authoritative figures, it is almost certain that the readers will choose to share the authoritative voice of Jesus and the narrator. As the narrative progresses, the readers encounter other characters: ‘the Jews.’ Without knowing that Jesus has healed this man, they say to him: ‘It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat’ (John 5:10). Their statement indirectly makes them witnesses of Jesus’ healing power because they see the man walking and carrying his mat.⁷⁰ In this sign narrative, we have the sick man who physically experiences Jesus’ healing power and we have ‘the Jews’ who do not know that Jesus has healed the man, but see him walking. Even though, in this respect, they physically participate in this miracle, there is no sign of faith. Rather, ‘the Jews’ plot to kill Jesus because of this (John 5:18). Therefore, within the narrative, there are those who physically experience the sign but fail to see its significance.

⁷⁰ Schnelle, *Antidocetic*, 166.

In this healing miracle, the paralysed man physically experiences Jesus' healing power, while 'the Jews' see this man walking after he has been healed. They both physically see Jesus and participate in this event with all of their senses. However, they both fail to see the significance of this miracle. This does not mean that signs do not lead to faith. Rather, it shows that there are different responses to the signs. Some have experienced the signs physically and believe, just like the disciples and the official's household in the first two signs, while others experience the signs, but do not believe, like 'the Jews' in this story.

On the other hand, although this physical healing event remains opaque to 'the Jews,' who did not see the moment Jesus healed the man, the readers are given a vivid narrative presentation of the scene. Even though the readers, too, did not physically see the man getting up and walking, they can see the whole scene in their imagination through John's vivid narrative, and can be emotionally involved. Also, because of their knowledge of Jesus and the witness of the Baptist to Jesus, they have spiritual insight to see the significance of this sign. They 'see' not only the miracle, but also the significance of the miracle.

1.4. Feeding the Five Thousand

There seems to be a connection between the feeding of the five thousand and the healing of the paralysed man. In John 6:2, John tells us that many people followed Jesus because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick.⁷¹ The healing of the paralysed man is probably to be included in 'the signs.' It seems that John, by mentioning 'the signs' before his narrative of the feeding miracle, is suggesting that this miracle is also a sign of Jesus.

In the first three signs, we see emphasis on physical senses, taste, sight and hearing. In this miracle, there seems to be no emphasis on the senses, just the mention of eating bread, which is physical and material. Even though John uses several verbs

⁷¹ 'The signs' are plural and therefore may refer to the second and the third sign or to signs which are not recorded. Salier (2004:82) argues that this sign cannot refer to the incident at the beginning of chapter five, due to the geographical reference. However, it is impossible to prove that John does not think of these people as having followed Jesus from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee in the north.

of sight, they do not seem to have any direct relationship with the sign itself. Some people might even argue that the use of sight is just an unavoidable part of the narrative. However, if we compare this narrative with the Synoptics, we see an emphasis here on the verbs of sight.

This sign is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. The narratives of this miracle in the Synoptics are all very similar. It is possible that they share the same source as this narrative. The authors of the Synoptics use the verb ἀναβλέπω,⁷² which is the only verb of sense perception used in the narrative of the feeding miracle.⁷³ John does not use the phrase ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, which occurs in all other three Gospels. Instead, he uses θεωρέω (John 6:2), θεάομαι (John 6:5) and εἶδον (John 6:14). In John 6:2 and 6:14, these verbs are connected with σημεῖον. If, as some scholars suggest, John was familiar with Mark's account, then it is remarkable that John's references to sense perception are far more numerous than in the Synoptic narrative.⁷⁴ Indeed, John's connection of the verbs of sight with σημεῖον suggests that he emphasises the visibility of the signs. This is shown in how John narrates this sign, so that it is vivid to his readers by involving their senses.

There are several means by which John makes his narrative vivid. Firstly, he uses ecphrastic language,⁷⁵ such as 'green grass' (John 6:10), 'twelve baskets of the fragments of the five barley loaves,' and 'these people are filled with bread' (John 6:26). Secondly, John uses 'verbal cues' to tell the readers to use their imagination, a technique commonly used by Cicero as shown in Chapter 5.⁷⁶ Jesus did not just 'see' (θεασάμενος) a large crowd coming toward him but also 'lifted up his eyes' (ἐπάρας οὖν τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς). 'Lift up his eyes' is a Semitic phrase (cf. John 4:35), which is to be distinguished from the devotional gesture of looking up to heaven (John 11:41;

⁷² The phrase ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν occurs in Matt 14:19; Mark 6:41 and Luke 9:16. The verb ἀναβλέπω literally means 'to see again' or 'to look up' and is used in John 9:11, 15, 18 with the connotation of 'receiving sight.' Brown, *John*, 1:373.

⁷³ Εἶδον is used only in Mark 6:38.

⁷⁴ Carson, *John*, 267; Barrett, *John*, 271–272.

⁷⁵ A. D. Myers, *Characterizing Jesus: A Rhetorical Analysis on the Fourth Gospel's Use of Scripture in Its Presentation of Jesus* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 107.

⁷⁶ It is a common technique to trigger readers' imagination. Cicero uses phrases such as 'before my eyes' to tell the readers that he is imagining a scene and intends the readers to do the same. Cf. Cicero, *Verr. II*, 4.50.110.

17:1).⁷⁷ The crowd is the object of his sight. It is an indication to the readers to see with their mind's eye and to picture the scene that has been described.⁷⁸ Thirdly, John's statements, 'the presence of the crowd' (John 6:2) and 'they saw the sign (ιδόντες ὃ ἐποίησεν σημεῖον) that Jesus did' (John 6:14) helps to make the scene vivid. The presence of a crowd and an appeal to sense perception are commonly used in Plato's and Cicero's writings to achieve ἐνάργεια.⁷⁹ Lastly, the particular description of particular actions, such as 'Gather up the fragments left over' (John 6:12) and 'they filled twelve baskets' (John 6:13), also help to create a pictorial image. All of these combine to draw the readers into the narrative, so that they can experience this sign through their sensory imagination. This level of sense perception is different from that of those who physically experience the signs.

The crowd physically experiences the signs by eating the bread but they do not believe in Jesus.⁸⁰ This is shown when Jesus says to them, in John 6:26, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.' As in the healing of the paralysed man, Jesus' miraculous acts did not lead anyone into faith. The crowd followed Jesus because they had seen the signs but John never mentions their faith in Jesus, as he did in relation to the two signs in Cana. Their unbelief is made clear in later passages in which they ask Jesus for signs, even though they have already seen the signs that Jesus performed on the sick and they have themselves experienced a sign. They say to Jesus, 'What sign (σημεῖον) are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe (ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν) you? What work are you performing?' (John 6:30).⁸¹ Jesus rebukes their unbelief saying, 'But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe (ἐωράκατέ [με] καὶ οὐ πιστεύετε)' (John 6:36). These people have seen Jesus and experience the signs physically but, because they lack spiritual insight, they cannot see who Jesus really is

⁷⁷ Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:14.

⁷⁸ Similar usage in John 11:41, he lifted up his eyes (ᾤρεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἄνω).

⁷⁹ Cf. Cicero, *Verr. I*, 1.7.19 and Plato, *Apol.*, 31d. See more examples in Chapter 5.

⁸⁰ Johns argues that the crowd believed Jesus because of the sign; however, she neglects the fact that Jesus rebuked the crowd for their unbelief in John 6:36. Johns and Miller, "Signs": 532. Schnackenburg also thinks that those people who witnessed the sign had not understood its meaning. Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:20.

⁸¹ Johns argues that 'a similar petition occurs in 2:18–22.' And, in both cases, Jesus goes on to give a sign, namely, his own flesh. Johns and Miller, "Signs": 532. However, this rendering cannot be derived from the text. Jesus is responding to their last question about manna, not about the sign. Besides, from the reaction of the crowd in John 6:41–54, there is no evidence to show that they believed in Jesus after seeing the sign.

and they fail to see God's revelation in Jesus. They see only that Jesus is 'indeed the prophet who is to come into the world' (John 6:14), the one like Moses (Deut 18:15, 18).⁸²

By contrast, the readers, even though they cannot physically experience the sign, see more than the characters. Through the narrator's voice, the 'inside view' of Jesus is shared with the readers (John 6:15), so that they know why these people are following Jesus and that Jesus withdraws from them. We are told that the crowd was looking for Jesus and that when they found him, they asked, 'When did you come here?' (John 6:25). John does not record Jesus' response because this information has been provided by John in John 6:22–24. Therefore the readers know how and when Jesus gets there but the characters do not. Responding to their question, Jesus says to them, 'You are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves' (John 6:26). Ironically, the crowd sees the sign physically but does not see the significance of the sign. The readers do not physically see the sign, but they are drawn into the narrative through their sensory imagination and are able to see the significance of the sign. They have spiritual insight to see that the feeding miracle attests to the divine power of Jesus. As God provided manna for the Israelites in the wilderness, so Jesus has the ability to provide bread for the crowd. This sign also affirms Jesus' identity as the one about whom Moses and the prophets wrote (John 1:45). They can see that Jesus is the life-giver who meets not only the physical needs of human beings but also their spiritual needs (John 6:33, 35).

John's sense perception is complicated, especially in the discourse after the feeding miracle, where Jesus speaks about eating his body and drinking his blood. There, the readers are again presented with different characters with different levels of perception. Through the narrator's voice, the readers know that many of Jesus' disciples 'turned back and no longer went about with him' (John 6:66). But Simon Peter, who represents the voice of the twelve, says to Jesus, 'You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God' (John 6:68–69). The readers have two groups of people in front of them, the ones that have left Jesus and the ones that believe in Jesus. Both of these groups have

⁸² Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 83.

physically seen the signs of Jesus, but they respond differently. The narrator here provides the readers with extra information at the conclusion of the extension of the narrative of the feeding miracle, an ‘inside view’ on Judas, who was going to betray Jesus (John 6:71). Between these deterrent responses, the readers are again invited to share the perspective of those who physically experience the miracle and respond with faith.

1.5. Healing the Blind Man

The narrative of this sign begins with an encounter between Jesus and his disciples and a man blind from birth. In John 5, the man’s sickness is connected to his sin. Nevertheless, Jesus rejects a connection between sin and the blindness of this man. Jesus tells his disciples that the man is blind in order that God’s work may be manifested (φανερῶθῃ) in him. The verb φανερόω is an invitation to visualisation. The act of Jesus ‘makes a transcendent dimension visible in a concrete way.’⁸³ The intangible work of God is thus made perceptible to the disciples and this reinforces the foundation of their faith.

The motif of blindness and sin can be traced back to the Old Testament and, in particular, to the book of Isaiah. We have seen in Chapter 4 that the sin of Israel is the cause of their blindness and deafness. In response to their blindness and deafness, God will execute judgment upon them. The Israelites’ lack of knowledge of God is related to that spiritual blindness and deafness (Isaiah 6:9–10).⁸⁴ In the motif of ‘blindness and deafness,’ we see an emphasis on the knowledge of God, which the Israelites should have retained or regained by seeing God’s deeds and works and hearing His law. These sense-perceptible deeds and works of God are the basis of the knowledge of God, yet some, because they fail to see the significance of God’s mighty works, cannot grasp that knowledge.

At the start of this narrative, Jesus says that this man ‘was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him’ (John 9:3). The Pharisees and ‘the Jews’ have seen the mighty work of Jesus, but they fail to see that this is the work of God. That is

⁸³ Bockmuehl, "Phaneroō": 90.

⁸⁴ See Chapter 4, section 6.1.

why Jesus says to them, ‘If you were blind, you would not have sin.’ Their sin is due to their claim to see.⁸⁵ This contrasts with the opening statement (John 9:1) in which the disciples connect the blindness of the man with sin. The blind man sees the work of Jesus and also sees that this is the work of God. His physical sight becomes the basis of his spiritual insight. John tells us at the beginning of the story that Jesus saw the blind man (John 9:1) and now, at the end of the story, that the blind man is able to see Jesus (John 9:37).⁸⁶ This is the real purpose of the gift of sight: to see Jesus and to believe that he is the Son of Man.⁸⁷ Without physically having seen Jesus and his work and having heard Jesus’ words, he would not have gained spiritual insight to see that Jesus was the Son of Man.

Since, in John’s theology, sense perception is so important for gaining spiritual insight, he has to make the readers ‘see’ Jesus and his work. To achieve that, as we have seen, John uses the techniques of ἐνάργεια. First, John provides detail of how this man was healed and this detail is repeated several times to enhance its vividness. Instead of simply saying that Jesus opened the man’s eyes, John tells us that Jesus ‘spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes’ (John 9:6). Then Jesus says to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (John 9:7). The man obeys Jesus’ command and comes back able to see. This process is repeated again through the blind man’s voice when he recounts how Jesus has healed him, ‘The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, “Go to Siloam and wash.” Then I went and washed and received my sight’ (John 9:11). Through these details and this repetition the readers, even though not present at the scene, can see vividly in their imagination how Jesus heals this man.

Another way in which John enhances vividness is through the use of action verbs. To describe how Jesus heals the blind man, John uses many action verbs, such as ‘spat (ἐπτυσεν),’ ‘made (ἐποίησεν),’ ‘spread (ἐπέχρισεν)’ in John 9:6 and ‘go (ὑπάγε)’ and ‘wash (νίψαι)’ in John 9:7. These actions verbs help to draw the readers into the narrative for they help to create dramatic pictorial images of how Jesus heals the man.

⁸⁵ J. M. Lieu, "Blindness in the Johannine Tradition," *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988): 83–95, at 84.

⁸⁶ Larsen, *John*, 157.

⁸⁷ Brown, *John*, 1:375.

The third way in which John makes his narrative vivid is his use of contrast. Through the neighbour's voice, the readers know that this blind man used to sit and beg because he was born blind (John 9:8), but now this man has received his sight and is able to see (John 9:7, 11). The man's parents also testify that the man was born blind (John 9:19, 20), but now sees (John 9:21). The stark contrast of this man's condition, born blind but now able to see, enhances the vividness of the narrative.

Lastly, John uses repetition and the presence of the crowd together to enhance the vividness of his account. John uses two verbs to describe the blind man's ability to see: βλέπω (nine times) and ἀναβλέπω (four times). βλέπω is first used when the narrator describes how the blind man came back able to see (βλέπων) in John 9:7. Then, when the blind man tells his neighbours how he received his sight, he uses the verb ἀναβλέπω (John 9:11). He says to them, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight (ἀνέβλεψα).' Both verbs appear together in John 9:15, 'Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight (ἀνέβλεψεν). He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see (βλέπω)."' The blind man retells the story but uses a different verb for seeing this time. The last two occurrences of ἀναβλέπω are both in John 9:18: 'The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight (ἀνέβλεψεν) until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight (ἀναβλέψαντος).'⁸⁸ Through repetition and the presence of the crowd, John draws his readers in, so they can experience the events they otherwise will not be able to experience.

The fact that John always makes his sign narratives so vivid supports the argument that John draws on the rhetoric of sense perception to make his testimony about God's revelation in Jesus more compelling to his readers. The readers cannot see Jesus and his signs physically, but through ἐνάργεια they can see with their imagination, so that the scenes are vivid for them. Through engaging in these scenes emotionally, their faith on Jesus is again strengthened.

⁸⁸ This is omitted in P⁶⁸ and some minor witnesses. The repetitive use of this verb in John 9:18 makes it appear awkward, so some copyists omit it. However, this repetition shows John's emphasis on the fact that this man indeed received his sight, for he had never seen before. Ibid., 1:373; M. Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts as Juridical Controversy* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 135.

1.6. The Raising of Lazarus

We now come to the last sign of Jesus, which is also the climax of his public ministry. In the first sign, the turning of the water into wine, God's glory is manifested through the act of Jesus. In the last sign, the illness of Lazarus is said to be 'for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it' (John 11:4). Of all of the signs of Jesus, it is only of the first and the last that John explicitly states that they are related to God's glory and only with regard to the last sign is Jesus, the Son of God, said to be glorified through it. This is partly because the raising of Lazarus is the sign, which leads to Jesus' glorification on the cross and partly because, as with all the other signs, this is an occasion for the manifestation of Jesus' glory.⁸⁹ The glory of God and the glory of Jesus are inseparable.⁹⁰ The glory of God is to be seen whenever Jesus manifests his glory.⁹¹ In John's Gospel, the glory of God is perceivable in the works of Jesus as it was visible in the signs of Moses in the Old Testament.

It is fair to say that the narrative of the raising of Lazarus is a most vivid and emotional passage. Verbs of sense perception are prominent here (John 11:1–45) and there are three senses involved, sight (ἵδε; βλέπω; εἶδον; ὁράω; θεάομαι), hearing (ἀκούω) and smell (ὀσζω). The prominent use of sense perception in the narrative of this sign indicates its significance and shows John's intent to make this narrative compelling to his readers.

John begins his narration with a vivid and detailed description, including names and place (as befits juridical testimony). He tells us that the story takes place in Bethany, the village of Mary and Martha (John 11:1). He does not simply point out the relationship between Mary and Lazarus but also reminds the readers that Mary 'was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair'

⁸⁹ Caird, "Glory": 272.

⁹⁰ John 11:4; cf. 16:14–15. 'It is apparent that the Father glorifies himself and his Son but not the Holy Spirit, that the Son glorifies the Father but not himself or the Spirit, and that the Spirit glorifies the Son and thereby the Father but not himself.' Cook, "Glory": 294.

⁹¹ Caird, "Glory": 272.

(John 11:2).⁹² Secondly, John mentions repeatedly the emotions of those involved in order to engage the readers' emotions. Jesus' love towards Lazarus is mentioned three times (John 11:3, 5, 36). The weeping of the people is also mentioned several times. Jesus sees Mary and 'the Jews' who came with her weeping (John 11:33), and Jesus also weeps (John 11:36). This description of emotion helps to involve the readers emotionally in the narrative.

Thirdly, John creates a pictorial passage by providing details. Through the voice of Martha, John tells the readers that Lazarus has been dead for four days and that there is a stench (ὄζει) (John 11:39). The verb ὀζω is used only once in John. The stench would be highly unpleasant. The mention of it, however, is of great effect in that it convinces the readers of the death of Lazarus. Readers in the early centuries of the Christian era would know the smell of a dead body not promptly disposed of. This detail is significant for it is definite proof that Lazarus was dead and decomposing.⁹³ It shows that John is eager to make vivid to his readers the death of Lazarus, so that the manifestation of Jesus' power to give life to the dead can be made more real to them. Added effect is given in the vivid scene where Lazarus comes out from the tomb, still bound with cloth: 'The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth (κερίαις), and his face wrapped in a cloth (σουδαρίῳ)' (John 11:44). Because he is bound he cannot even remove the cloth himself. Jesus has to ask someone to unbind him and set him free. All these details help to create a visual image in the readers' mind, an image of a dead man wrapped in clothes walking out of the tomb.⁹⁴

Another thing that John does to draw the readers into the narrative is to create a climax by narrating the event gradually to keep them in suspense and anxiety. The story begins in John 11:1, where we are first told that Lazarus is ill. This information is then sent to Jesus (John 11:3) but Jesus does not come to Judea immediately (John

⁹² It has been suggested that John thinks that his readers are already familiar with the anointing story and that that is why John identifies Mary to his readers by alluding to the anointing event, before he narrates that event in John 12:1–8. Cf. North, "John": 453–456.

⁹³ W. S. North, *The Lazarus Story within the Johannine Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 156.

⁹⁴ The raising of Lazarus is one of the most popular scenes on Christian sarcophagi. R. M. Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (London: Routledge, 2000), 25. Lazarus is always presented as a small mummy-like figure wrapped with cloths. For Jensen's analysis of this image, see Jensen, "Christian Art," 23–27.

11:6). Then the situation gets worse; Lazarus dies (John 11:14). Only then does Jesus depart and go to Judea. We are told that Jesus arrives and finds that Lazarus has already been in the tomb four days (John 11:17). The readers are now expecting to see how Jesus will bring the dead man to life. But John keeps his readers in suspense. He directs the readers' focus to the conversations between Martha, Mary and Jesus (John 11:20–32). After their conversations, they go to Lazarus' tomb together (John 11:38). Jesus asks them to take away the stone. At this stage, the readers are anxious to see how Jesus brings the dead man to life, but Jesus, instead of raising Lazarus back to life right away, after the stones are removed, prays (John 11:41–42). After his prayer, Jesus cries with a loud voice (φωνῇ μεγάλῃ), “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43). Only then are the readers told that Lazarus has come back to life. It takes a long time before the readers are actually told how Jesus brings Lazarus to life. The drawn-out account engages the emotions of the readers as they share the anxiety of the characters.

At the scene when Jesus brings Lazarus back to life, there are several characters present, Martha, Mary and ‘the Jews’ who go to the tomb with Mary (John 11:45). Mary, Martha and many of ‘the Jews’ see the sign and believed in Jesus, but some of them go and report the event to the Pharisees (John 11:47). All of them physically see what Jesus does and see that Lazarus comes out from the tomb alive. But not all of them see the significance of the sign. Some ‘Jews’ see the sign, but still do not see who Jesus is. Mary and Martha not only see the sign, but also see Jesus as the Lord. Through this sign, they know that Jesus has the power to bring the dead to life. What they do not see is that this sign is connected with the death of Jesus and his glorification in that it signifies Jesus' own death and resurrection. Mary and Martha have enough spiritual insight to see beyond this physical event, but they still do not grasp its whole significance. Thus, again, there are different levels of sense perception. Some see physically but fail to see spiritually. Some see physically and beyond that. They see who Jesus is through their eyes of faith. Yet they do not see the significance of this sign.

John's readers, however, have a different level of sense perception. They do not physically see the sign, but through the text, they see what Mary and Martha see, that Jesus is the giver of life. They also see what Mary and Martha do not see, that

this sign points to Jesus' death and resurrection and that this is how Jesus will be glorified. By adopting the ideology of the narrator, they gain spiritual insight to perceive what the characters fail to perceive. But still, for John, this spiritual insight is rooted in the original physical sense perception of events.

Our discussion shows that John draws out the significance of signs (and sign-acts) in the Old Testament and applies it in his Gospel to Jesus' signs. In the Old Testament, God's revelation is made known to the Israelites through visible signs and prophetic sign acts.⁹⁵ Seeing God's work made manifest in marvelous ways is how God reveals himself to his people. This Old Testament theology of God's revelation is similar to John's own theology. God reveals himself in the visible work of Jesus. As we go through the Johannine sign narratives, we hear the resonances of Old Testament motifs such as the Exodus miracles, which are comparable to Jesus' signs in general, the manna and Jesus' body, and the Isaianic blindness motif in relation to sin and judgment, while the prediction of the unbelief and the motif of God's hardening are also found in John.

John takes these Jewish materials and relocates them in his narrative. He crafts his material using Graeco-Roman strategies. Through ἐνάργεια, John makes his signs compelling to his readers, so that they can experience these physical events through their sensory imagination. Once the readers are physically drawn into the narrative, they, by aligning themselves with the privileged witnesses, are able to perceive the significance of the signs which the characters fail to perceive.

2. Other Testimonies

John's rhetorical use of sense perception occurs not only in his narrative of signs but also in other testimony accounts such as those of the Samaritan woman, the temple cleansing and the anointing at Bethany. These accounts all reveal Jesus' identity, and may be seen as testimony to Jesus and they all, like the signs narratives, show that sense perception contributes to testimony.

⁹⁵ For the discussion of prophetic sign acts in the Old Testament, see Chapter 4, section 5.

2.1. The Samaritans and Their Testimony (John 4:7–30, 39–42)

In this narrative, there is a strong attempt to make the Samaritans' encounter with Jesus vivid to the eyes and other senses of the reader. Firstly, John provides the details of the name of the place and the location where this conversation starts: the place is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph (John 4:5). There is a well, called Jacob's well here (John 4:6). Secondly, through the conversation between Jesus and the woman, the scene is given an element of tension, and therefore vividness. By using direct speech and letting the conversations be heard by the readers, John enhances that vividness. Thirdly, the use of the action verbs, 'draw (ἀντλέω)' (John 4:7), 'go (ὑπάγω)' (John 4:16) and 'come and see (δεῦτε ἴδετε)' (John 4:29) further enhances the effect. Jesus has a long conversation with the woman, which turns her into a witness who brings other Samaritans to come to see Jesus.

This phrase 'come and see' has already occurred in the story of the first disciples in John 1. After their conversation with Jesus, they go and invite others to come to see Jesus. They recognise Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Son of God, and the King of Israel. Similarly, the Samaritan woman testifies to Jesus' identity after her conversation with Jesus and her testimony brings other Samaritans to come and see Jesus (John 4:29). We see a repeated pattern, 'come and see' in the story of the Samaritans (John 4:1–26, 39–42) and at the end of Jesus' public ministry (John 12:20–22). This indicates John's emphasis on the importance of perceiving Jesus.

The Samaritan woman testifies to Jesus' identity because she hears Jesus' words, which revealed something greater than human knowledge. The Samaritans believe through hearing the woman's testimony, so they come to see Jesus. Their faith in Jesus is then confirmed when they themselves hear Jesus' words. Hearing plays a dominant role in this story (John 4:42).

People are drawn to Jesus not only upon seeing his signs but also upon hearing his words. In either case, a physical encounter with Jesus is important. That is why John always tries to draw his readers into the narrative, so that they can 'see and hear' Jesus through their imagination.

2.2. The Cleansing of the Temple

In the Old Testament, the knowledge of God is sometimes conveyed to the people through the prophets' sign-acts.⁹⁶ In John, we see similar incidents, such as the cleansing of the temple, which make God's relationship with Jesus known to the people. The temple incident is recorded in John 2:12–25, immediately after the first sign of Jesus. Even though John does not employ sense perception explicitly in the narrative of the temple cleansing, his vivid description has the same effect as the use of sense perception, that is, to bring the events vividly before the readers' eyes.⁹⁷ For example, the detailed description of what was in the temple, cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables (John 2:14) help the readers to see the scene inside the temple in their mind. The detailed description of Jesus' particular actions and the gradual narration also help to draw in the readers by engaging their emotions. John first tells his readers that Jesus makes 'a whip of cords.' Then Jesus uses this whip to drive 'all of them out of the temple.' Finally, Jesus 'poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.' From Jesus' gradual actions and deliberate actions, we can see that Jesus' emotions build up. The readers can feel Jesus' anger and, reading the vivid description of his violent actions as he pours out the coins and overturns the tables, the readers can easily imagine the disturbance and the noise that the animals and the people made, as caused by Jesus' action.

The temple cleansing, like the signs discussed above, testifies to God's revelation in Jesus because it 'has special symbolic significance in attesting to Jesus as God's authentic representative.'⁹⁸ The question posed by 'the Jews,' 'What sign (σημεῖον) can you show (δείκνυεις) us for doing this?' indicates that they understand the symbolic significance and that what they are looking for is a sign or evidence which can prove Jesus' identity and authority as God's representative.⁹⁹ The verbs (ποιέω, δείκνυμι and ὁράω) that John associates with σημεῖον indicate the visual

⁹⁶ See our discussion in Chapter 5.

⁹⁷ Myers identifies that John employs *ekphrasis* in his narration of this temple cleansing event, as in his description of the actual time when Jesus was in the temple and his colourful details concerning what Jesus saw when he entered the temple, the sheep, oxen, doves and money changers sitting at their tables. For detailed discussion, see Myers, *Jesus*, 142–143.

⁹⁸ Köstenberger, "Sign": 101.

⁹⁹ Some scholars argue that the temple cleansing is itself a sign. Cf. *Ibid.*, 97; Carson, *John*, 181. However, John never states explicitly that this is a sign. Jesus' response shows that the sign he will give is his resurrection (John 2:19).

nature of the sign.¹⁰⁰ In response, Jesus answers, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise (ἐγερῶ) it up’ (John 2:19). The verb ἐγείρω is a verb commonly used for resurrection. If John’s remark in John 2:22 is to be taken to refer to Jesus’ resurrection, this implies that the sign that they are asking for will be shown to them but shown only when Jesus is raised from the dead. His resurrection will be a sign that will be undoubtedly visible.

2.3. The Anointing of Jesus¹⁰¹

The anointing of Jesus comes straight after the raising of Lazarus. It is evident that John deliberately connects this anointing event with the last sign that he has Jesus perform during his public ministry. The anointing of Jesus can be seen as the continuation of the last sign of Jesus. These two events are connected in two ways. First, in John 11:2, Mary is identified as the woman who ‘anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair.’ Secondly, Lazarus is mentioned four times in this anointing story (John 12:1, 2, 9, 10), and the fact that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead is mentioned twice (John 12:1, 9). The resurrection of Lazarus is closely connected to the death of Jesus by the latter’s prediction of his own death after the raising of Lazarus. It is ironic that the illness of Lazarus leads not to his death but to Jesus’ death (John 11:53).¹⁰² This connection is also hinted at by the sense of smell. In the story of Lazarus, John uses ὄζω to emphasise the death of Lazarus. In the anointing story, the phrase ὁσμὴς τοῦ μύρου is used to refer to the future death of Jesus on the cross (John 12:7).

John describes the anointing of Jesus in a very vivid way by using action verbs, such as ‘anointed (ἡλείπειν),’ ‘wiped (ἐξέμαξεν)’ and ‘filled (ἐπληρώθη).’ Although no verb of smell is used, it is strongly implied through John’s vivid

¹⁰⁰ Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 49.

¹⁰¹ Even though the anointing story is recorded in all four Gospels, it is only John who explicitly mentions the aroma of the anointing oil.

¹⁰² Not only the death of Lazarus is linked with the death of Jesus but also his resurrection, which symbolises the resurrection of Jesus and the future resurrection of the believers. A. T. Lincoln, "I Am the Resurrection and the Life": The Resurrection Message of the Fourth Gospel," Pages 122–144 in *Life in the Face of Death: The Resurrection Message of the New Testament* (ed. R. N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 140–141.

description: 'The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume' (John 12:3).¹⁰³ The description of the quantity and the cost of the μύρου νάρδου suggest the strong fragrance of the perfume (John 12:3). The quantity and value of the perfume also gives John's readers an indication as to how intense the aroma was. When such a quantity of expensive perfume is poured out onto Jesus' feet, it is not surprising that the house is filled with its fragrance. John's use of ἐνάργεια appeals to the sense of smell which invokes his readers' olfactory imagination, as if they were present and smelling the fragrance of the perfume. Mary's act of wiping Jesus' feet with her hair also enhances the vividness of the narrative because this creates a pictorial image of how Mary anointed Jesus. John's vivid description and appeal to sense perception will evoke the memory of it for any who saw the actual event. For those who were not present at the scene, the use of ἐνάργεια will trigger their imagination, as if they were there to witness the anointing of Jesus.

The anointing event can be seen as a sign-act which points to what will take place in the future. It is connected with the death of Jesus, which is also his glorification. The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem as King of Israel is narrated after the anointing event. This is another indication that the anointing event is to be taken as a sign-act like the ones we see in the accounts of the Old Testament prophets.

When describing these events, John appeals to sense perception to make these events vivid for his readers and thereby to attain his rhetorical purpose. It is through physical sense perception, the visible act of the cleansing of the temple and the olfactory act of anointing, that John brings out for his readers the symbolic significance of these two events.

3. The Close of Jesus' Public Ministry

The emphasis on and complication of sense perception continues to the end of Jesus' ministry. The 'hour' that Jesus speaks about in the first sign has now come. Jesus is about to be glorified and therefore, his soul is troubled (John 12:27). It is in

¹⁰³ Howes also notes the role that the sense of smell plays in different rites. He argues that there is a 'universal association between olfaction and transition.' D. Howes, "Olfaction and Transition," Pages 128–147 in *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* (ed. D. Howes; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 128.

this context that a voice comes from heaven. The characters in the narrative hear this voice through their senses, but here there are two kinds of hearing. Some people think that they have heard thunder, while others hear an angel speaking to Jesus (John 12:29). Ironically, the readers, who do not hear the voice physically, hear it correctly through the narrator's description. They know that this voice is neither thunder nor an angel speaking. It is the voice of God, who says, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again' (John 12:28). It is not only the sense of hearing that is prominent, sight is also significant. Jesus says to the crowd, 'I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself' (John 12:32). The language of 'lifted up' appeals to the sense of sight. What Jesus says indicates (σημαίνων) the kind of death he is to die (John 12:33). The use of σημαίνων echoes the use of σημειῶν, which shows that what Jesus says is significant, but none of the characters understands what Jesus means. The readers may not grasp what Jesus means either but they surely know that Jesus' language of 'lifted up' is significant and are able to connect it with his signs.¹⁰⁴ All of those are associated with God's testimony in Jesus.

The significance of seeing Jesus continues in Jesus' use of the imagery of light and darkness. This imagery was pervasive in the Book of Isaiah, as shown in our Chapter 4. In response to their misunderstanding and unbelief, Jesus says to the crowd:

The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light. (John 12:35–36)

The imagery of light and darkness appears in the Prologue and continues throughout the Gospel. It is significant for interpreting the events in the sense-perceptible world. It is always used as imagery and never refers to a physical brightness and darkness. John deliberately chooses an image that construes all that goes on in the physical realm, and its relationship to the moral and spiritual realm, in

¹⁰⁴ For the repetitive use of 'lifted up,' see H. Mardaga, "The Repetitive Use of *Hypsoō* [Greek Characters] in the Fourth Gospel," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 74 (2012): 101–117.

terms of the fundamental conditions for sense perception (light vs. darkness). Thus the imagery enhances rather than downplays the importance of perception in the physical realm.

To make a concluding remark on Jesus' public ministry, John quotes Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 and gives a reason for the people's unbelief mentioned in John 12:38–40.¹⁰⁵ John immediately explains how he interprets the quotation of Isaiah 6:10: 'Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke about him' (John 12:41).¹⁰⁶ What Isaiah sees is God's glory manifested in the earthly Jesus.¹⁰⁷ By quoting Isaiah, John underscores that seeing Jesus' glory is seeing both the ordinary human figure and the divine glory of God at the same time. Indeed John may even be contrasting Isaiah, who sees the glory of both the pre-existent Jesus and the earthly Jesus, and those people who physically see Jesus and his signs but fail to see God's glory manifested in him.¹⁰⁸ Sense perception of the earthly Jesus is not alone sufficient, but nor is divine glory perceived apart from it.

4. Conclusion

Throughout Jesus' public ministry, what is seen, heard, tasted and smelled is not perceived by everyone, and sometimes people perceive remarkable things in what might seem ostensibly unremarkable. For example, even though some people do not witness Jesus raising Lazarus to life, nonetheless, simply by seeing Lazarus, they believe in Jesus (John 12:9–11). The physical dimension of sense perception is tremendously important, but it is not alone sufficient and there are different ways of responding to it. Hence, how people see is as important as what they see. Also, no one ever gets the full picture during the public ministry. There is always something greater to come, and something yet to be revealed. The imagery of light and darkness draws attention to the visible and invisible dimensions and works with the issues and ambiguities raised by sense perception, magnifying their significance to cosmic proportions. Physical sense perception is a barrier for some of the characters in the

¹⁰⁵ For the discussion of Isaiah 53:1; 6:10 and John 12:38–43, see Williams, "Testimony," 108–115.

¹⁰⁶ Isaiah's temple vision is considered to be the background of his vision of Jesus. See Williams, "He Saw," 65.

¹⁰⁷ Williams, "Testimony," 117; Williams, "Isaiah," 112.

¹⁰⁸ Williams, "He Saw," 67.

narrative, but paradoxically, John tried to make his narrative vivid, so that his readers can 'see' these events as if they were physically happening before their eyes. Through this vivid sensory perception and with the spiritual insight that the readers gain through sharing the perceptions of Jesus and the narrator, the faith of the readers is strengthened. Through the analysis of these physical events, we can see how John deploys the rhetoric of sense perception in his presentation of testimony to draw the readers into the narrative so that they are emotionally engaged, as they too become witnesses to Jesus.

Chapter 8: Witnessing the Passion, Death and Resurrection

In the previous chapter, we showed that John uses the technique of ἐνάργεια to draw his readers into the narrative, so that they can themselves become witnesses. The rhetoric of sense perception continues to play a significant role in the witnessing of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. This narrative, however, raises important questions about sense perception and testimony because this is the point at which Jesus is going to cease to be perceptible by the physical senses. The coming of the Paraclete and Jesus' macarism (John 20:29) have been taken by some scholars as evidence against the importance of sense perception. This chapter argues the contrary, that it is precisely through the memory of what was perceived by the senses that the Paraclete operates and makes Jesus known when the Johannine testimony is perceived and shared.

We begin our discussion with the issues raised by Jesus' departure and the coming of the Paraclete. This raises and responds to the question of whether the first disciples are in a disadvantageous position compared with later believers, on the grounds that the former did see, hear and touch Jesus but did not have the Paraclete. Our discussion shows that the coming of the Paraclete helps the first disciples understand what they have perceived, and this puts them instead in an advantageous position. The Paraclete does the same thing for the readers. The difference is that the readers cannot perceive physically but only imagine what they would have experienced through their senses. Thus it is important for John's readers that they 'see' through their imagination. The second part of this chapter supports this argument by showing how John places strong emphasis on the importance of sense perception both for those who were at the scene of Jesus' death and resurrection and in the continued life of the church. We show that sense perception is still regarded as important even in the context in which Jesus will be absent from the physical sense perception of the world and when he says that those who believe without seeing are blessed.

1. The Absence of Jesus and the Coming of the Spirit

The Farewell Discourses are the bridge to the period when the disciples must testify to the incarnate Christ after he has departed from them (John 15:27), and they emphasise the importance of the gift of the Paraclete to 'lead [the disciples] into all truth' (John 16:13). Jesus even says that it is better that he goes because otherwise the Paraclete will not come to the disciples (John 16:7). Jesus' absence and the presence of the Spirit are linked. Some scholars argue that Jesus denigrates the value of sense perception in his earthly ministry. Similarly, with regard to the Thomas Episode, sense perception is regarded as unimportant by some scholars because of Jesus' macarism in John 20:29, but further investigation will show that that is not the case. In this period of transition, that is from the end of physical sense perception (the departure of Jesus) to the advent of the possibility of greater understanding of what was sensually perceived (through the coming of the Paraclete), the significance of sense perception is not denigrated. Rather it continues, and the Paraclete enhances and perfects its role.

1.1. Promise of the Paraclete

The departure of Jesus is the main theme of the Farewell Discourse (John 13:31–16:33).¹ After Jesus' symbolic actions, he tells his disciples that he is going away (John 13:31–38). Jesus' talk about his departure has troubled his disciples; it is in this context that Jesus brings in the discussion of the vision of God and his role as God's sole exegete (John 14:6–12). The promise of the Paraclete (John 14:16–17) immediately follows John 14:6–12. The absence of Jesus leads not only to the coming of the Spirit but also to the coming of Jesus (John 14:18–21, where we find the discussion of seeing and not seeing Jesus). By placing the promise of the Paraclete between the passages on seeing God (John 14:6–12) and seeing Jesus (John 14:18–21), John relates the promise of the Paraclete to the role of sense perception.²

¹ P. A. Holloway, "Left Behind: Jesus' Consolation of His Disciples in John 13,31–17,26," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 96 (2005): 1–34, at 21. Segovia argues, similarly, that the theme of this unit is the departure of Jesus and the consequences of Jesus' departure for his disciples. F. F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word: The Johannine Call to Abide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 67.

² There has been a debate about the unity of the Farewell Discourse and different layers of redaction, see G. L. Parsenios, *Departure and Consolation: The Johannine Farewell Discourses in*

In John 14:6–12, Jesus raises the question of knowing him and knowing and seeing God, where both physical sense perception and spiritual perception are in view. In John 14:7, Jesus says to his disciples, ‘If you have known (ἐγνώκατε) me, you will know (γνώσεσθε) my Father also. From now on you do know (γινώσκετε) him and have seen (ἐωράκατε) him.’ There is a textual variant of the first verb. Many manuscripts (A B C D al) read ἐγνώκειτε instead of ἐγνώκατε (P⁶⁶ & D^{*}). This reading is adopted by RSV, ‘If you had known (ἐγνώκειτε) me, you would have known my Father also.’ The subjunctive would mean that the disciples did not have true knowledge of Jesus.³ That reading, however, would be contradicted by the following verse (John 14:7b), which affirms that the disciples did already possess such knowledge. Unless we accept that John 14:7b is ‘an amelioration of a difficulty,’⁴ ἐγνώκατε is a better reading.⁵ In this case, the knowledge of Jesus is the condition for attaining the knowledge of the Father. This interpretation fits well with John’s view of Jesus as the mediation of knowledge of God (John 8:19; 10:14, 15, 38).⁶

Even though the disciples struggle to understand Jesus, they do possess some knowledge of Jesus which other characters lack, and Jesus affirms that they already possess knowledge of him, so he says, ‘From now on you do know (γινώσκετε) Him and have seen (ἐωράκατε) Him.’ The use of the perfect tense affirms the fact that the disciples have seen the Father. Jesus’ affirmation raises the question of how the vision of God is attained and also creates an opportunity for him to further develop the theme of knowing God and seeing God.

Light of Greco-Roman Literature (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 37–76; Segovia, *Farewell*, 285–291; F. F. Segovia, "John 15:18-16:4a : A First Addition to the Original Farewell Discourse?," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983): 210–230; J. Painter, "The Farewell Discourses and the History of Johannine Christianity," *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981): 525–543; L. S. Kellum, *The Unity of the Farewell Discourse: The Literary Integrity of John 13:31–16:33* (London: T&T Clark, 2004). The main issue that gives rise to this debate is the delay of Jesus’ departure. In John 14:31, Jesus says to his disciples, ‘Arise, let us depart from here’ (John 14:31), but the actual departure of Jesus does not take place until John 18:1. Cf. F. J. Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonour: Reading John 13-21* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 52. To solve this problem, Bultmann (*John*, 459) argues that John 14:25–31 is the conclusion of the Farewell Discourse. Thus John 15–17 is often regarded as an insertion either by John or by redactors. Although there has been a debate about the unity of the Farewell Discourse, the style, flow and coherence of the Farewell Discourse are less questioned. On style unity and structural unity, see Kellum, *Unity*, 79–135. We will note below some differences in emphasis between material in John 14 and John 16 but we leave open the question of the literary history of this material.

³ Ridderbos, *John*, 494.

⁴ So Brown, *John*, 2:621.

⁵ Ridderbos, *John*, 494; Bultmann, *John*, 607.

⁶ See Chapter 6.

Philip's reply, 'Show us the Father,' shows his complete failure to understand Jesus. He apparently takes Jesus' words literally, as if Jesus meant that they had seen God's face. This misunderstanding allows Jesus to point out the relationship between physical sense perception and spiritual insight. So Jesus replies to Philip, 'Whoever has seen (ὁ ἑώρακώς) me has seen (ἑώρακεν) the Father' (John 14:9). Only now are Philip and the readers told why Jesus said that they have seen the Father. It is because they have seen Jesus. Physical sense perception is certainly in view, but sense perception alone is not sufficient. Philip's request to him to show them the Father has already shown that. They have seen Jesus physically but they do not 'see' the relationship between Jesus and the Father. They need spiritual insight to see that. Thus Jesus explains further, 'Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works' (John 14:10).

Jesus affirms the importance of physical sense perception by relating his works to the disciples' faith. The disciples are encouraged to believe Jesus because of his works (John 14:11), which are also the works of the Father (John 14:10). 'His works' include all the signs and prophetic actions that Jesus has performed, which were perceptible by sight.⁷ Even though Jesus does not state at this point that these works were visible, our study in Chapter 7 shows that sense perception is significant in apprehending Jesus' works. Hence Jesus is trying to lead his hearers into a sense of continuity between physical sense perception and spiritual insight by affirming and showing that the vision and knowledge of God are encountered through seeing him and seeing his works. John places this discussion of sense perception at the beginning of the Farewell Discourse, thus framing it in a way that affirms that spiritual insight and sense perception should go together, even if they do not always do so in human experience. The coming of the Paraclete develops this continuity of physical and spiritual sense perception.

⁷ For the relationship between signs and works, see Johns and Miller, "Signs": 525–526.

The promise of the Paraclete is recounted in John 14:16–17:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate (παράκλητον), to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees (θεωρεῖ) him (αὐτό)⁸ nor knows (γινώσκει) [him]. You know (γινώσκετε) him (αὐτό), because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

Jesus affirms that seeing him is seeing the Father, but he is about to be removed from the physical sight of the disciples, so he gives the promise of the Paraclete. He says that the world cannot receive the Spirit because ‘it neither sees (θεωρεῖ) him nor knows (γινώσκει) him.’ Bultmann argues that θεωρεῖ and γινώσκει are synonyms and should not be distinguished.⁹ However, it is possible that by emphasising the verb of sight, Jesus wants to continue the theme of sense perception already present in John 14:6–12 and John 14:18–21. This shows that Jesus’ absence and the promise of the Paraclete are closely related to the theme of sense perception. Thus it is not surprising to find Jesus’ speech about seeing and not seeing him in John 14:18–20:

I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while (ἔτι μικρόν) the world sees (θεωρεῖ) me no longer (οὐκέτι), but you see (θεωρεῖτε) me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you (John 14:18–20).

The phrase ἔτι μικρόν occurs in John 7:33; 12:35; 13:33, while μικρόν alone occurs five times in John 16:16–19.¹⁰ In the first three instances, this phrase is used to indicate that Jesus’ physical presence with the disciples is only for a short time. In

⁸ There is a textual variant of αὐτό. The neuter accusative is attested in P^{66*75} & B Q, while the masculine accusative is attested in P^{66*} D* L. The former is the more likely original text. I translate as ‘him’ instead of ‘it’ because I regard the Spirit as personal and male. The reason for that is because the παράκλητος is masculine, and Jesus’s promise that he will send another παράκλητος may suggest that παράκλητος takes his place. Thus παράκλητος is to be regarded as both masculine and personal, like Jesus himself.

⁹ Bultmann, *John*, 616 n. 7.

¹⁰ All of these occurrences are on the lips of Jesus.

John 14:19 and 16:16–19, μικρόν is used in association with the verbs of sight, θεωρέω (present tense) and ὀράω (future tense). All of these occurrences are associated with Jesus' departure from this world to be with the Father. In John 14:19, there is a contrast between the world and the disciples but the meaning of the verb θεωρέω is ambiguous because it is difficult to make a sharp distinction between physical sense perception and spiritual insight. The term οὐκέτι suggests that 'the world' saw Jesus while he was among them.¹¹ This refers to physical sense perception. The world has physically seen Jesus, but it never really 'sees' him, because it does not know him. Therefore, they do not have the chance to 'see' him anymore, that is, to participate in eternal life. On the other hand, the disciples not only see Jesus physically but also 'see' him in a deeper way, and therefore will continue to 'see' him more deeply and participate in his eternal life.

In John 14:21, Jesus tells his disciples that he will manifest (ἐμφανίσω) himself to those who love him and obey his commandments. This supports the argument that 'the world' no longer 'sees' Jesus because it does not love him and obey his commandments (John 14:23). In John 14:22, Judas asks Jesus, 'How is it that you manifest (ἐμφανίζεις) yourself to us, and not to the world?' Judas is clearly speaking about physical sense perception, but Jesus' reply that he and the Father will come to those who love and obey his commands seems to suggest spiritual rather than physical presence (John 14:23).

The theme of the absence and presence of Jesus occurs again in John 16:16–22 but with different emphasis. We have already encountered the theme of Jesus' absence in John 14:19, where Jesus is absent from the sight of the world, but present in the sight of the disciples. However, in John 16:16, it is the disciples who experience both the absence and presence of Jesus: 'A little while (μικρόν), and you will no longer see (θεωρεῖτε) me, and again a little while (μικρόν), and you will see (ὄψεσθε) me.' The seeing of Jesus in John 14:9 is placed in the context of love and obeying Jesus' commandments (John 14:20–24), while the coming of Jesus in John 16:20–22 refers to Jesus' physical manifestation to the disciples after his

¹¹ Ridderbos, *John*, 509.

resurrection.¹² Thus we see a shift in emphasis from seeing and knowing Jesus in love and obedience (14:18–20), i.e. spiritually, to seeing him when he reappears physically at the resurrection (16:16–22), i.e. physically. This shows that there is continuity between the experience of the first disciples, who see the resurrected Christ physically (16:16–22), and the experience of those who see him only in love and obedience (14:18–20).

Jesus' departure is closely associated with the coming of the Paraclete.¹³ Jesus says to his disciples, 'it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you' (John 16:7). Wendy North argues that John is addressing his readers to let them know that they are at 'an advantage over those who were with Jesus at the time.'¹⁴ She adds further, 'Without that advantage, the disciples in the Gospel narrative generally fare badly when it comes to understanding Jesus ... just to have "been there" and to have witnessed the events at first hand does not constitute an advantage.'¹⁵ The first disciples are indeed in a disadvantageous position without the Paraclete but this is not because they perceive Jesus physically, but because they do not fully understand what they perceive. It is only after Jesus' glorification that they grasp the significance of what Jesus has said to them when they remember his words (John 2:22; 12:16). This comes about through the work of the Spirit, who will teach them everything and remind them of all that Jesus has said to them (John 14:26). Therefore, the role of the Paraclete does not denigrate their sense perception but rather helps perfect their understanding of what they have perceived. The Spirit is important for helping the disciples to fully understand Jesus but to say that it is only through the internal presence of the Spirit that the disciples can fully understand Jesus' identity, as Brown suggests, does not take into account the significance of Jesus' earthly work and words.¹⁶ The presence of the Spirit cannot replace what Jesus has done on earth and is not intended to do so. The function of the Spirit is to guide the disciples into all the truth (John 16:13) and to point back to the significance of Jesus' life and work,

¹² Cf. Brown, *John*, 2:643; Ridderbos, *John*, 505; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 258; Lincoln, *John*, 395.

¹³ For the meaning of παράκλητος, see K. Grayston, "The Meaning of Paraklētos," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 13 (1981): 67–82.

¹⁴ North, "Absence": 44.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 44–45.

¹⁶ So Brown, *John*, 2:711. Cf. Ridderbos, *John*, 530.

namely the physical signs he performed and the words he uttered.¹⁷ Thus what the Spirit does is based on what Jesus has already done and said, that is, on his physical interaction with the disciples (John 13:10; 15:3, 9–11).¹⁸

The coming of the Spirit is beneficial to the disciples because they can finally fully understand Jesus' words and actions. The Spirit brings new revelation but this revelation is built upon the physical actions and words of Jesus. Thus the disciples' 'being there and witnessing events at first hand' is necessary but not in itself sufficient. Once they have the Paraclete, they are indeed in an advantageous position. This we show in the next sections.

1.2. 'Doubting Thomas' and Later Generations of Disciples

As mentioned in Chapter 7, scholars who regard faith based on signs as inferior faith often cite John 2:23–25; 4:26–50 and 20:24–29 as evidence. We discussed the first two of those passages in Chapter 7. We now focus on the last passage. Jesus says to Thomas, in John 20:29, 'Because you have seen (ἐώρακας) me, you believed (πεπίστευκας). Blessed (μακάριοι) are those who have not seen (μὴ ἰδόντες) and yet have come to believe (πιστεύσαντες).' This verse is taken by some scholars as downgrading signs-faith and sense perception. Two assumptions underlie this view. Firstly, those scholars who propose this view think that Thomas has always been depicted unfavourably in John's Gospel. Secondly, based on this view, they regard Jesus' macarism as a rebuke to Thomas because he bases his faith on sight and touch. We examine each of those assumptions in the next sections.

1.2.1. The Character of Thomas (John 11:16; 14:5 and 20:24–29)

Some scholars think that Thomas receives a hostile portrayal in John's Gospel. Bultmann, for example, argues that Thomas is chosen as 'the doubter.'¹⁹ Thomas is also the one who 'shows himself to be blind' (John 14:5) and must 'see' in order to

¹⁷ North, "Absence": 44.

¹⁸ Ridderbos, *John*, 530.

¹⁹ Bultmann, *John*, 694, n. 2.

believe in John 20:24.²⁰ Schnackenburg thinks that Thomas represents the types of believer who are ‘blind to faith’ and with ‘weak faith.’²¹ Morris calls Thomas a ‘hard-headed disciple,’ while Bonney characterises him as one ‘whose vision is limited by a worldly realism.’²² Because of this hostile portrait of Thomas, some scholars argue that what Jesus says in John 20:29 is a rebuke to him. However, the view that Thomas is portrayed as an unsympathetic character is debated. Consequently, the view that John 20:29 is a criticism of Thomas is also questionable. In this section, we first investigate the role of Thomas in John 11:16; 14:5 and 20:24–29 to see whether the thesis that Thomas is always characterised unfavourably can be sustained. Then we explore what Jesus means in John 20:29 when he says, ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’

Thomas appears four times in the Gospel (John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2).²³ He is first mentioned in the story of Lazarus. In John 11:16, Thomas is introduced as ‘the twin’ (Δίδυμος)²⁴ who says to his fellow disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’ Scholars interpret his statement diversely. Bultmann argues that Thomas’ utterance signifies ‘a resignation to the fate that threatens alike the disciples and Jesus’ but because it is spoken by Thomas, it is a ‘blind devotion.’²⁵ North comments that Thomas has shown ‘a thorough lack of grasp’ of Jesus’ actions.²⁶ Beasley-Murray also thinks that this is a ‘blind devotion’ because it says more than Thomas realises.²⁷ He is not very harsh toward Thomas but sees him as a ‘loyal but undiscerning’ disciple.²⁸ It is true that what Thomas says is more than he realises. Thomas does not understand that the journey of death is indeed a journey of life: Jesus’ death will turn out to be his exaltation.²⁹ His understanding of the journey to Judea is utterly different from how Jesus sees it, but his statement shows his loyalty

²⁰ Ibid., 400.

²¹ Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:329.

²² Morris, *John*, 852. For Bonney’s characterisation of Thomas, see Bonney, *Thomas*, 137–141, here 138.

²³ The last appearance of Thomas is not included in our discussion because he is simply mentioned by name.

²⁴ Bultmann argues that Θωμᾶς is a Greek transliteration of the Semitic תאומא (twin). Bultmann, *John*, 694, n. 2. But Brown points out that there is no evidence that this Aramaic word is used as a personal name. Brown, *John*, 1:424. John always explains Thomas’ name, so the reference to Thomas as Δίδυμος does not have any special purpose. Bonney, *Thomas*, 137 n. 20.

²⁵ Bultmann, *John*, 400.

²⁶ North, “Absence”: 45; North, *Lazarus*, 56–57.

²⁷ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 189.

²⁸ Ibid., 252.

²⁹ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 124.

to Jesus and his readiness to follow him (John 10:27), despite the danger ahead (John 11:8).³⁰ Even though he is going to face death, he still decides to follow Jesus.³¹ He is indeed portrayed in John 11:16 as a courageous and loyal follower of Jesus.³²

The second appearance of Thomas is in John 14:4–5. Thomas is again in conversation with Jesus. Jesus tells his disciples that he will go to his Father's house to prepare a place for them and that he will come again. He assures them that they know the way that he is going (John 14:2–4). This time, Thomas asks Jesus a question, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' (John 14:5). Bultmann thinks that Thomas foolishly asks a question to which he should know the answer. He adds, 'His question is typical of the mythological standpoint, which can only conceive of the goal and the way as things within the world.'³³ Koester's view of Thomas is also hostile. He sees him as an example of a 'brash skepticism.'³⁴ This harsh critical view does not do justice to Thomas. Indeed, Thomas does indeed fail to grasp the implications of Jesus' words in John 14:2–3,³⁵ but the use of a plural 'we' shows that all the disciples fail to understand Jesus' words. Hence, it is unfair to criticise Thomas and single him out as the only one who is sceptical and does not understand Jesus.³⁶ Misunderstanding is a stylistic, literary means used by John to allow him to articulate his ideology to the readers.³⁷ Most of the characters in John's narrative struggle to understand Jesus' words and actions (John 3:10; 8:27; 10:6; 12:16; 13:7; 20:9). It is only after Jesus' glorification and through remembering that they finally have a complete understanding of what Jesus said (John 12:16). Nevertheless, their misunderstanding brings them a step closer to truth.³⁸ Thomas' misunderstanding leads him to ask Jesus a question. Jesus does not rebuke him but explains further that he is 'the way, and the truth, and the life' and that it is only through him that one can go to the Father (John 14:6).

³⁰ Bonney, *Thomas*, 137.

³¹ Ridderbos, *John*, 392.

³² Carson, *John*, 410; Bennema, *Jesus*, 164; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:328.

³³ Bultmann, *John*, 603.

³⁴ Koester, *Symbolism*, 256.

³⁵ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 252.

³⁶ Bennema, *Jesus*, 165 n. 3.

³⁷ O'Brien argues that John 'deliberately creates misunderstandings for the reader, so that the reader experiences what is described.' O'Brien, "Narrative Rhetoric": 288.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 293.

Our discussion shows that there is no strong evidence to support the claim that John portrays Thomas unfavourably. Jesus does not rebuke Thomas in the first two passages, neither does John give any negative comments regarding Thomas' statement in John 11:16 and his question in John 14:5.

We now come to the third appearance of Thomas, John 20:24–28. We are told that Thomas is absent when Jesus first appears to the disciples (John 20:24). So the disciples tell him: 'We have seen (ἐωράκαμεν) the Lord' but he refuses to believe. He says to them:

Unless I see (ἴδω) the mark (τύπον)³⁹ of the nails in his hands, and put my finger (βάλω τὸν δάκτυλον μου) in the mark (τύπον) of the nails and my hand in his side (βάλω μου τὴν χεῖρα), I will not believe (John 20:25).

Thomas' request for physical or tangible evidence is often regarded unfavourably.⁴⁰ The other disciples were only granted sight of Jesus' wounds and they believed, yet Thomas wants both to see and to touch them. Bonney and Brown thus argue that Thomas is 'interested in probing the miraculous as such.'⁴¹ There are other scholars who argue that John is presenting Thomas' response as sincere and frank, for anyone in that situation would hope to see Jesus with his own eyes and, furthermore, might want to touch his wound, not only because touching in those days was 'the surest means of ascertaining the reality of some phenomenon,'⁴² but also because that was the only way to verify that Jesus indeed had been resurrected in his physical body. The importance of that is, for example, shown in the mid or late second-century *Epistula Apostolorum* 11–12. In *Epistula Apostolorum* 11, when Jesus appears to the disciples, they refuse to believe him and think that they are seeing a ghost. Then Jesus

³⁹ The term τύπωσις (τύπος) was a crucial word and concept in Stoic epistemology and was used to illustrate Stoic theories of perception, see V. Platt, "Making an Impression: Replication and the Ontology of the Graeco-Roman Seal Stone," *Art History* 29 (2006): 233–257.

⁴⁰ Larsen, *John*, 208. Bonney suggests that Thomas is not asking for proof, rather, his statement is a 'sarcastic expression' of unbelief. Bonney, *Thomas*, 160. However, grammatically, it is more likely that Thomas is asking for physical evidence. If it can be presented, he will believe. For scholars who think that Thomas is asking for a proof, see Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:330; Bultmann, *John*, 694–695.

⁴¹ Bonney, *Thomas*, 160; Brown, *John*, 2:1045.

⁴² F. D. Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2011), 1185.

invites Peter, Thomas and Andrew to touch his nailed hands and wounded side and to observe his footprint in order to cast away their doubts.⁴³ Only then do they believe: ‘But now we felt [touched] him, that he had truly risen in the flesh.’⁴⁴ This emphasis on the physical sense-perceptible aspect of the risen Jesus shows how important and persuasive it was as evidence in antiquity.⁴⁵

A week later Jesus appears again to his disciples, when Thomas is also with them (John 20:26). After greeting them, Jesus says to Thomas:

Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe (μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός). Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Because you have seen (ἑώρακα) me, you believed.’⁴⁶ Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe (μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες).’ (John 20:27–29)

From the narrative, we are not sure whether Thomas has touched Jesus or not.⁴⁷ But Thomas’ doubt is certainly cast away. Bonney argues that Jesus’

⁴³ To observe his footprints because ‘a ghost, a demon, leaves no print on the ground’ (*Epistula Apostolorum* 11:49). Translation taken from Haenchen, *John*, 2:212.

⁴⁴ *Epistula Apostolorum* 12. Translation taken from M. R. James and J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 563. Cf. Luke 24:36–43. It is likely that the author rewrites Luke’s story but emphasises the tactile aspect.

⁴⁵ Greek philosophers who believed that the most reliable human knowledge was granted by touch included Theophrastus (271–287 B.C.), *Metaphysics* 25.9b15, cited from G. W. Most, *Doubting Thomas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 48. For the primacy of touch, see Aristotle, *De Anima*, 434b11–14. There he argues that touch is indispensable, cited from M. Paterson, *The Senses of Touch* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 17. The relationship between sight and touch is complicated but they are often considered as related senses. See *ibid.*, 16–17, 21. The sense of touch tests and confirms what could be perceived by sight and thus assures perception. Similarly, there is an old English proverb that runs, ‘seeing is believing, but feeling’s the truth.’ M. Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 35.

⁴⁶ This statement is rendered as a question by some English translations, RSV, NRSV and also by Nestle-Aland. But this is more probably a statement that confirms Thomas’ faith. Cf. Ridderbos, *John*, 648. Schnackenburg also argues that this is a statement rather than a question, but in an accusing tone. Schnackenburg, *John*, 334.

⁴⁷ From Jesus’ response in John 20:29, it is probable that Thomas believes as soon as he sees Jesus. Thus, most modern commentators consider that Thomas no longer needs to touch Jesus’ wound for he has seen the risen Jesus. M. M. Smith, *Sensory History* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 93. Cf. Köstenberger, *John*, 579; Moloney, *John*, 537; Morris, *John*, 753; Carson, *John*, 657; Barrett, *John*, 572; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:332; Most, *Thomas*, 58. However, Borchert and Brown assert that he indeed touches Jesus. This view is also found among second century readers such as Ignatius and in

physicality is not the point of this passage since John has already shown the possibility of touching Jesus in John 20:17 and 20.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, in these two passages, Jesus does not invite Mary and the disciples to touch him. Because of Thomas' request, Jesus invites Thomas both to touch his side and to see his hands. To see and to touch are ways of examining evidence. This shows that John is indeed emphasising the physicality of Jesus' body. This is also how most Greek Fathers understand it, for the Thomas episode is often used by them as apologetic material to emphasise the bodily resurrection of Jesus.⁴⁹

It is understandable for Thomas to ask for tangible and solid evidence before he believes something contrary to knowledge and experience.⁵⁰ Moreover, the disciples believe in Jesus' resurrection not because of Mary's account but because they, too, see the risen Jesus.⁵¹ In John, most of these characters who believe in Jesus have a physical encounter with Jesus.⁵² Thus, it is unfair, as some scholars suggest, to see Thomas as being portrayed negatively because he should have believed the words of the disciples rather than demanding further proof.⁵³ His request to touch Jesus is understandable, as Lee argues, 'Thomas's stress on the incarnate presence of the Lord, and his conviction that the wounds are intrinsic to that reality, are signs of awareness and insight. This makes his desire to see and touch, in Johannine terms, comprehensible.'⁵⁴ Thus we should not regard faith that is based on seeing as superior to faith that has to see and touch.

Although John talks about a correct faith in Jesus, that is, in Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah, he does not stipulate a correct means of arriving at that faith. In fact, John talks about diverse means of coming to faith in Jesus. Some come to

Epistula Apostolorum. G. L. Borchert, *John 12–21* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 314; Brown, *John*, 2:1027.

⁴⁸ Bonney, *Thomas*, 158 n. 78.

⁴⁹ See S. Harstine, "Un-Doubting Thomas: Recognition Scenes in the Ancient World," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 33 (2006): 435–447.

⁵⁰ The resurrection of Lazarus is itself miraculous and contrary to human experience, yet many people were there seeing with their own eyes and probably touching him as well.

⁵¹ Barth argues: 'If Thomas has not seen Jesus (and touched) [Jesus], he would not receive the evidence which the other Twelve delivered that the cross of the Lord is the glory and he would not be the eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus and not an Apostle.' Cited from Larsen, *John*, 209.

⁵² Bennema, *Jesus*, 167.

⁵³ Schnackenburg, *John*, 332–333; Bultmann, *John*, 696.

⁵⁴ D. Lee, "Partnership in Easter Faith: The Role of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 17 (1995): 37–49, at 43. Similarly, Köstenberger, *John*, 580; Ridderbos, *John*, 649; Morris, *John*, 754.

faith through seeing the signs of Jesus (John 2:11, 23; 11:45) while others come to faith through hearing his words (John 4:41, 53; 8:30). As long as they can lead someone to believe in Jesus, whether through seeing, hearing, touching or any combination of those, all means are considered equal. Thus John's imagery of touch should not be read negatively, rather it should be seen simply as an account of a means of coming to faith in Jesus through evidence of fact. Having seen John's emphasis on sense perception throughout his Gospel, it seems fair to conclude that he includes this account for a positive purpose.

Some scholars suggest that Jesus is rebuking Thomas when he says, *μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός* (John 20:27) and thus see Thomas as an unbeliever.⁵⁵ The adjective *ἄπιστος* is translated as 'faithless' (ASV, KJV),⁵⁶ 'disbelieve' (ESV) 'unbelief' (NET), 'doubting' (NIV) and 'doubt' (NRSV). All these translations suggest that Thomas is a doubter from the point of view of religious faith.⁵⁷ As discussed above, however, Thomas is a loyal and courageous follower of Jesus. Can this loyal disciple who is willing to die with Jesus lose his faith in Jesus and become faithless or unbelieving? Not all scholars think so. James Charlesworth, asserts, 'Thomas is not a doubter; he is the reliable realist' and a 'courageous leader' in the Gospel of John.⁵⁸ Harstine also argues that Thomas is 'a loyal and faithful servant, a servant who is waiting for a sign of recognition that only his true master can provide.'⁵⁹

The words *ἄπιστος* and *πιστός* are used only once in John. Therefore, to understand what Jesus means, we have to look at the usage of these words in Johannine traditions and in a wider context. The word *πιστός* is used twice in the Johannine Epistles. In 1 John 1:9, it is used to refer to God, who is faithful, while in 3 John 5, it is used to praise the believers for their faithful (trustworthy) work towards

⁵⁵ Bonney, *Thomas*, 158.

⁵⁶ Cf. Matt 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41; 12:46.

⁵⁷ In the New Testament, *ἄπιστος* is often used to refer to unbelievers (1 Cor 7:12; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Tim 5:8).

⁵⁸ J. H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press, 1995), 313.

⁵⁹ Harstine explores the use of *ἄπιστος/πιστός* in antiquity and examines the recognition scene in the story of Odysseus. He reaches the conclusion that Thomas, like Penelope, is waiting for a conclusive evidence that only Jesus can provide. Once he receives this sign, he is more than ready to follow Jesus. Harstine, "Thomas": 447.

their brothers and strangers. In Revelation, πιστός is used of Christ (Rev 1:5; 3:14; 19:11) and his words (Rev 21:5; 22:6). It is also used to encourage the believers to remain faithful under persecution (Rev 2:10) and the believers are also called the faithful ones (Rev 17:14). The word ἄπιστος is used only once in Revelation 21:8 to refer to the unbeliever. If we survey the use of the word ἄπιστος in the wider context, we see that this word has a wider meaning than the Bible translations suggest. It can mean ‘incredible’ (Plutarch, *Num*, 7.3; Philo, *Opif.*, 114), ‘not to be trusted’ or ‘untrustworthy’ (Diogenes, *Lives*, 9.93; Philo, *Her.*, 93), ‘treacherous’ (Philo, *Ebr.*, 78). When ἄπιστος is used together with πιστός, it is often used to refer to personal loyalty or trustworthiness (Appian, *Civil Wars*, 4.3.14; Diogenes, *Lives*, 9.93; Demosthenes, *Aristocrates*, 137).⁶⁰

If we compare Jesus’ words in John 20:29, μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός with Revelation 2:10, γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, we see that the structure is very similar. Both Thomas and the persecuted Christians are encouraged to γίνου πιστός. This shows that γίνου πιστός can be used as an encouragement for the believers when they are facing a particular situation. For Thomas, he is facing the incredible reality of Jesus’ resurrection, while for the church in Smyrna, they are facing severe persecution, even to the point of death. By calling them to γίνου πιστός, Jesus does not imply that they are faithless but, on the contrary, that they are faithful.

There are, however, some nuances of difference between the syntax of these two passages. In Smyrna, these believers are already faithful, but are called to become ‘faithful unto death.’ Thus there is a development from what they are not yet to what they shall become. While Thomas is told ‘do not become ἄπιστος’ but ‘become πιστός,’ this suggests that he is, at this point, neither ἄπιστος nor πιστός, yet he is encouraged to ‘become πιστός.’ This means that the command to ‘become’ envisages development from the present state. We can refer to Luke 19:17, where the combination of γίνου πιστός indicates a development to become faithful with a deposit. ‘Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy (πιστὸς ἐγένου) in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.’ The slave has been neither ἄπιστος nor πιστός when simply presented with the money, but he has become πιστός because

⁶⁰ For discussion of the literary background of the word ἄπιστος, see *ibid.*, 443–445.

of his response to the deposit entrusted to him. Thus Thomas is not being called either faithless or faithful at this point, but he can ‘become πιστός’ in a new way after Jesus has granted him evidence.

We cannot be certain what Jesus means because we do not have enough evidence, but from the use of these two words in a wider context, it is unlikely that Jesus regards Thomas as an unbeliever. If Harstine’s observation is right that Thomas is waiting for a sign that only Jesus can provide, then Jesus’ words can be interpreted as an encouragement for Thomas to become faithful (πιστός), since Jesus has granted Thomas’s request for empirical verification of his wound. Indeed that is what has happened. Once Thomas receives this sign of Jesus (the wound in his body), he responds immediately and confesses Jesus as ‘My Lord and my God’ (John 20:28).

1.2.2. The Meaning of John 20:29

Jesus’ response to Thomas’ confession, ‘Because you have seen (έώρακα) me, you believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe (μη ιδόντες και πιστεύσαντες)’ (John 20:29), again is seen by some scholars as a reproach of Thomas’ faith based on sight.⁶¹ Nevertheless, as Bultmann points out, if this is a reproach, then this reproach should apply to all the other disciples for they believed only when they saw.⁶² Also, as Bonney shows, the parallels in language indicate that the evidence that Jesus presents to the disciples and to Thomas is identical. Thus, Jesus’ utterance ‘applies to the Easter community as a whole and not just to Thomas.’⁶³ Some scholars then argue that Jesus’ macarism puts all of the first disciples in a disadvantageous position because they all believed by seeing. This argument, however, does not take into account the passages where Jesus expects people to see his signs and believe in him (John 10:37–38; 12:37; 20:30–31). Ashton argues that this macarism is to ‘correct the thought of John’s readers’ who might think

⁶¹ Brown, *John*, 2:1046; Most, *Thomas*, 59; Haenchen, *John*, 2:211. Köstenberger also, based on this verse, says, ‘faith apart from seeing is superior.’ Köstenberger, *John*, 565. Lincoln argues that the object of ‘believe’ is the testimony of the disciples. Lincoln, “Resurrection,” 134. However, this interpretation is not supported by the text. It is most natural that the object of the belief is Jesus’ resurrection.

⁶² Bultmann, *John*, 696.

⁶³ Bonney, *Thomas*, 162.

these disciples are ‘somehow privileged over against themselves.’⁶⁴ This argument implies that John’s readers think that sense perception is important for faith so John has to correct it. Do we, then, have to understand this macarism as ‘a correction’ or is it possible that this is not a correction, but an assurance?

We have to compare two passages to help us understand what Jesus means here. The first passage is John 1:50. Jesus says to Nathanael:

Do you believe (πιστεύεις) because I told you that I saw (εἶδόν) you under the fig tree? You will see (ὄψῃ) greater things than these.

Nathanael does not believe the testimony of Philip about Jesus’ identity. He believes only when he encounters Jesus physically and hears Jesus’ words (John 1:45–48). After hearing Jesus’ words, Nathanael immediately confesses, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel’ (John 1:49). Upon hearing Nathanael’s confession, Jesus does not rebuke him, but even promises that he will see greater things. When we come to John 20:29, we see a similar pattern. Thomas does not believe his fellow disciples’ testimony about Jesus’ resurrection. It is only after Jesus manifests himself to him and speaks to him that he believes. He also immediately confesses, ‘My Lord and my God.’ Upon hearing his confession, Jesus promises a blessing for the future believers who believe without seeing. If Jesus’ words to Nathanael are not a rebuke, then there is no strong reason to consider John 20:29 as a rebuke to Thomas.⁶⁵ Schnackenburg argues that John 1:50 cannot be comparable to John 20:29 because Thomas has been ‘a long time follower of Jesus’ and therefore, he is not permitted any doubt.⁶⁶ However, we never find such a statement in John. The disciples’ faith is constantly challenged by Jesus. Their faith is not static.

⁶⁴ J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 364.

⁶⁵ O’Brien, "Narrative Rhetoric": 295. For a comparison between Nathanael and Thomas, see C. Knights, "Nathanael and Thomas: Two Objectors, Two Confessors – Reading John 20:24-29 and John 1:44-51 in Parallel," *The Expository Times* 125 (2014): 328–332.

⁶⁶ Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:334.

The other passage that we examine is John 13:17. This is the only other place the word μακάριος is also used.

If you know these things, you are blessed (μακάριοι) if you do them.

In John 13:17, μακάριος is used for those who have physically experienced what Jesus has done for them and are expected to do likewise. This blessing is for the first disciples, but is also for the readers. If the first disciples are already blessed by Jesus, then John 20:29 should not be taken as a statement that places the first disciples in a disadvantageous position, nor should it be taken as a reproach to Thomas to denigrate the importance of sense perception. Rather it should be taken as an assurance for future readers who will never see Jesus with their own eyes. Also, Jesus does not state that the ones who do not see but believe are *more* blessed than the ones who see and believe, but simply, ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’ For John’s readers when reading John 13:17, they already have the idea that the disciples are blessed. When they come to John 20:29, it is unlikely that they will read into it that Jesus is saying that these disciples are not blessed because they believe based on their sight. Therefore, to interpret Jesus’ words to mean that being with and seeing Jesus physically is to be less blessed than not seeing yet believing is reading too much into the text. Jesus’ point is that those who possess faith without seeing him physically are equally blessed with those who have seen.⁶⁷

Thomas is the only one in this scene who acknowledges Jesus as ‘My Lord and my God.’⁶⁸ This shows that he believes completely in Jesus’ divinity. He is a spokesman uttering the doxology on behalf of the believing community.⁶⁹ Thomas is not portrayed negatively in the Gospel. Rather, Thomas’ account provides an opportunity to bring out Jesus’ beatitude on the future community of faith. It opens up a possibility of coming to faith in Jesus without seeing. Hence John records Jesus’ statement not as a rebuke to Thomas but for the sake of his readers who are distant from the resurrection event, lack tangible evidence and will struggle to believe the

⁶⁷ Brown suggests that the reason John stresses this through the mouth of Jesus is because of ‘the death of the eyewitnesses and the passing of the apostolic generation.’ Brown, *John*, 2:1049.

⁶⁸ Although these two terms are often used together to refer to YHWH in the Old Testament, they are also used by the Roman emperor Domitian who wished to be addressed as *dominus et deus noster*, ‘our Lord and God’ (Suetonius, *Domitian* 13.2). Cited from Brown, *John*, 2:1049.

⁶⁹ Keener, *John*, 2:1211–1212; Köstenberger, *John*, 580.

resurrection of Jesus on second-hand evidence. They should not be discouraged because they cannot see the resurrected Jesus.⁷⁰ Their faith based on something other than seeing is singled out for blessing.⁷¹ 'Seeing and believing are transformed on the basis of the disciples' witness.'⁷² It is exactly because of John's emphasis on the importance of sense perception and on its positive role for the signs, that John has to add this macarism. Therefore, this macarism supports our argument that John emphasises the importance of sense perception.

1.2.3. Conclusion

In John 20, we have Mary, the disciples and Thomas seeing Jesus and believing. Their faith is based on seeing the resurrected Jesus. But future readers do not have the chance to see Jesus. Thus Jesus addresses them and assures them that they are as blessed equally with those disciples who have seen him physically and believed. Jesus' blessing is followed immediately by John's purpose statement. It is not coincidental that John refers to the language of 'signs' immediately after the blessing of Jesus and includes it as part of his purpose statement. This suggests that the signs, which foster faith, are an important component of John's Gospel. These signs, as we have shown in Chapter 7, are largely made known through the senses and rhetorical ἐνάργεια.

John has written his Gospel to strengthen his readers' faith. He writes his Gospel in a way that makes it vivid to draw his readers in, so that, through the characters' physical encounter with Jesus, they also can encounter Jesus through their imaginations and be more convinced about their faith. John does not want his readers to feel that they are not as blessed as those characters who encountered Jesus physically, so he adds a contrast between physically seeing Jesus and not physically

⁷⁰ Byrne and Perkins both argue that the faith of the disciple is an exemplar of the faith that does not see the risen Jesus. Byrne further emphasises the fact that the Beloved Disciple is like the later community who believe without seeing the risen Jesus. Byrne, "Faith": 93; P. Perkins, "I Have Seen the Lord" (John 20:18): Women Witnesses to the Resurrection," *Interpretation* 46 (1992): 31–41, at 39. This is in one sense correct but, unlike the later community, the Beloved Disciple has experience of and can see the earthly Jesus.

⁷¹ Byrne, "Faith": 92.

⁷² N. M. Watson, *Easter Faith and Witness* (Thornbury, Vic.: Desbooks, 1990), 103.

seeing Jesus. Thus Jesus' blessing does not diminish the importance of sense perception but instead celebrates it.

The discussion shows that in various contexts, of Jesus' imminent disappearance from the sight of the disciples, of the coming of the Spirit and of Jesus' macarism in John 20:29, sense perception is regarded as important. The coming of the Paraclete does not denigrate sense perception, rather it helps to enhance and perfect its role in bringing new revelation and truth.

2. Sense Perception and Testimony

In section 1, we showed that John did not denigrate the significance of sense perception in the testimony of the first disciples, either through the promise of the Paraclete, or through criticism of the doubting Thomas. We argue that, on the contrary, the Paraclete perfects their sense perception. This section supports that argument by showing that, even in a narrative that falls in the shadow of the Farewell Discourse, between the promise of the Paraclete and its reception, John places strong emphasis on the importance of sense perception both for those who were at the scene, and for the continued life of the church. There are four parts to this section. Firstly, we show that Jesus' testimony to truth is fulfilled through his death and resurrection and that John communicates this vividly to his readers, so that they can receive Jesus' testimony with sensory imagination. Secondly, we show how the disciples are meant to receive this testimony, so that they can become the models of seeing and believing. Thirdly, we refer back to John 13 to show how Jesus' prophetic sign-act communicates a pattern for sense perception and testimony to be combined in the life of the church. Finally, we survey other redactional layers of the Johannine tradition to support our thesis that the combination of sense perception and testimony is significant within the life of the Johannine community.

2.1. Jesus' Testimony to the Truth

Together with the resurrection, Jesus' death raises crucial questions about the role of sense perception and testimony. It is remarkable that in this passage, where the trial motif is most prominent, the language of testimony occurs only once and is used

by Jesus: ‘For this I came into the world, to testify (μαρτυρήσω) to the truth’ (John 18:37). In the Johannine account, Jesus is the only witness in the trial. He came to testify to the truth, yet he himself is the truth (John 14:6). Thus this is not only a trial of Jesus but also a trial of truth.⁷³ Those who belong to the truth will listen to his voice (John 18:18). ‘The Jews’ are depicted as not belonging to the truth for they are the ones who have put Jesus on trial.

One of the significant ways in which 18:37 is developed and fulfilled is in the portrayal of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection. This is Jesus’ testimony to the truth, at the culmination of his trial. For that reason, John’s narrative appeal to the sensory imagination in these scenes is significant, for this is how John communicates to his readers Jesus’ testimony to the truth. Therefore the narrative portrayal continues to establish the importance of sense perception and testimony. The emphasis on the impending gift of the Paraclete in no way diminishes John’s narrative insistence on the primacy of the senses in Jesus’ testimony. In the next section, then, we focus on the rhetorical vividness of the narratives of Jesus’ death and resurrection, in order to show how John makes Jesus’ ‘testimony to the truth’ vivid to the readers. Thereafter we consider how John uses the narrative to grapple with the theological issues of the relationship between sight and faith for those who testify to Jesus.

2.1.1. The Use of Ἐνάργεια in Jesus’ Passion, Death and Resurrection

Jesus’ testimony to the truth is brought to completion through his passion, death and resurrection. The appeal to sense perception is prominent in the scene at the cross. John’s use of the verbal cue, ‘when Jesus saw’ (John 19:26) is an invitation for the readers to imagine the scene. John then draws the readers’ attention to Jesus’ ‘seeing’ and his words to his mother and to the Beloved Disciple. John writes, ‘When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home’ (John 19:26–27). John goes on to provide particular details of Jesus’ circumstances to help his readers imagine the last moment of Jesus on this earth. John recounts Jesus’ words: ‘I

⁷³ Lincoln, "Resurrection," 135.

am thirsty' (John 19:28) to involve the readers viscerally through empathy with Jesus' physical need. John mentions that there was 'a jar full of sour wine (ὄξους)' standing there (John 19:29a). He describes how they put the wine to Jesus' mouth: 'they put a sponge full of the sour wine (ὄξους) on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth' (John 19:29b). When Jesus had received the sour wine (ὄξος), he said his last words, 'It is finished' (John 19:30a) and Jesus 'bowed his head and gave up his spirit' (John 19:30b). John's explicit mention of the mouth and the use of the word ὄξος three times focuses the readers on the sensation of the unpleasant taste.⁷⁴ Through those techniques of ἐνάργεια, viz. verbal cues and providing detail and repetition, the readers are drawn into the narrative through their imaginations.

After Jesus dies on the cross, John adds more details to the scene through using action verbs and repetition. The verb κατάγνυμι is used three times (John 19:31, 32, 33). John tells the readers that the soldiers broke the legs of the two people who were crucified with Jesus (19:32) but did not break Jesus' legs because he was already dead (τεθνηκότα). This is the second time that John has mentioned that Jesus is dead, but he uses different expressions to describe the death. The death of Jesus is confirmed for the third time through a very sensory description: 'one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out (αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ)' (John 19:34). Even though some scholars interpret αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ symbolically, this does not diminish John's strong emphasis on sense perception. He not only describes the action (ἔνυξεν) that caused blood and water to come out, the tool (λόγχη) that has been used, but also the part (πλευρά) where Jesus has been pierced. There is a strong colour contrast in the combination of blood and water. By specifying both water and blood, John appeals to his readers' sensory imagination. Not only that, to engage his readers emotionally, John appeals to the persuasive power of sense perception along with the testimony of the beloved disciple.⁷⁵ John says, 'He who saw this has testified (ἑώρακὼς μεμαρτύρηκεν) so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth' (John 19:35). The change of focalisation encourages the readers to join the position of the narrator as believer, so that they also can share this

⁷⁴ The emphasis on the sour wine is in contrast to the good wine that Jesus turned the water into and makes the sensation more intense.

⁷⁵ Although John does not specify the identity of the one who testifies, the general consensus is that this is the testimony of the beloved disciple as stated in John 2:24. Cf. Morris, *John*, 820; Brown, *John*, 2:936.

testimony. The juxtaposition of seeing and testifying (ἑώρακὼς μεμαρτύρηκεν) reminds us of John the Baptist's statement at the beginning of the Gospel, 'And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God' (John 1:34). John uses the language of sense perception and testimony to mark the end of Jesus' public ministry as he used it to mark the beginning. This shows that John wants his readers to see Jesus' crucifixion as a testimony corresponding to the theme of testimony to truth, as we saw in John 18:37.

John employs all the literary techniques available to him to communicate Jesus' death to his readers, so that they may receive Jesus' testimony to truth with sensory imagination. John presents vividly not only the scene at the cross but also the burial of Jesus, which is recorded in John 19:38–42. The body of Jesus (σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) is used three times.⁷⁶ The repetition of that term is significant for it helps to draw the readers into the narrative.⁷⁷ It is used twice in John 19:38, where Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body and, with Pilate's permission, comes and takes it. It is used again in John 19:40, where it says that they wrapped Jesus' body 'with the spices in linen cloths.' The emphasis on taking Jesus' body and wrapping it implies the sense of touch. John triggers the readers' sensory imagination by giving the names of the spices, 'a mixture of myrrh and aloes,' and the fact that it weighed 'about a hundred pounds' (John 19:39).⁷⁸ This vivid description of Jesus' burial, which appeals to sense perception, functions as a powerful tool to involve the readers emotionally and thus make them as if they are present at the scene.

⁷⁶ For the symbolic meaning of σῶμα, see S. M. Schneiders, "Touching the Risen Jesus: Mary Magdalene and Thomas the Twin in John 20," Pages 153–176 in *Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (eds. C. R. Koester and R. Bieringer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 161; S. M. Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Herder, 1999), 9–28; D. Lee, *Flesh and Glory: Symbol, Gender, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 29–64; K. Rahner, *The Theology of Symbol* (trans. S. Kevin; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 245–52.

⁷⁷ Theodoret of Cyrrhus also observes the emphasis on the body. He says, 'See how often the Evangelist shows that it was the body that was nailed to the cross, the body begged by Joseph of Pilate, the body taken down from the tree, the body wrapped in linen clothes with the myrrh and aloes...' Cited from J. C. Elowsky, *John 11–21* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007), 332.

⁷⁸ Such a large amount of spices was usually used only for royal burials. Cf. Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:296–297; Brown, *John*, 2:259–260. Thus some scholars argue that Jesus is buried as a King. Moloney, *John*, 510. Lagrange, however, proposes that this immense quantity of spices is a scribal error. Hoskyns, *Gospel*, 537.

In the narrative of Jesus' resurrection, John again presents his account vividly. In John 20:1–10, John uses several techniques to draw in the readers. Firstly, he uses the verbal cue, 'Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw (βλέπει)' (John 20:1), this is an invitation for the readers to use their imagination and see from the perspective of Mary, so that they see with Mary that 'the stone had been removed from the tomb.' The use of action verbs, such as 'run (τρέχω),' 'come (ἔρχομαι),' 'take (αἶρω)' (John 20:2) and 'stoop, bend down (παρακύπτω)' (John 20:5) help to create a pictorial image. The repetition of the verb 'run (τρέχω)' (John 20:2, 3, 4) also makes the whole scene dynamic and creates a sense of urgency. John also gives a detailed description of what was inside the tomb through the focalisation of the Beloved Disciple and Peter. The Beloved Disciple bent down to look in and saw the linen wrapping lying there (John 20:5). While the Beloved Disciple only looked from outside the tomb, Peter went into the tomb, so the readers see more detail through Peter's perspective. They are able to 'see' with Peter 'the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself' (John 20:7).

Mary's encounter with the angels and Jesus is recorded in John 20:11–18. After the disciples leave, she stays outside the tomb. For some reason she decides to look into the tomb and there 'she saw (θεωρεῖ) two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet' (John 20:12). The vivid description of angels in white gives readers a visual image. The description of where the angels are sitting is similar to that of where Peter saw the linen clothes placed. Both detailed descriptions start with the verb θεωρεῖ and indicate that Jesus' body is no longer there. The vividness of this scene is also enhanced by the use of dialogue. There are dialogues between Mary and the angels (John 20:13) and between Mary and Jesus (John 20:15, 16, 17). The use of the present tense for speech throughout the narrative also provides greater vividness.⁷⁹ Indeed, Mary's encounter with the resurrected Jesus is recounted almost entirely through dialogue. John's readers are encouraged to become eyewitnesses of this encounter with the angels and Jesus through ἐνάργεια. The same effect can be seen in John's narrative of the disciples' encounter with Jesus in John 20:19–23, to which we now turn.

⁷⁹ Lee, "Faith": 46; D. C. Fowler, "Meaning of 'Touch Me Not' in John 20:17," *Evangelical Quarterly* 47 (1975): 16–25, at 18.

John begins this narrative by giving a particular description of the place where the disciples meet, a house where the door is locked (John 20:19). It is under these conditions that Jesus suddenly appears and stands among them (John 20:20). We see a change in their emotional state. In the beginning, they are fearful because of ‘the Jews,’ but when they saw Jesus, they become joyful (John 20:20). To enhance the vividness of his narrative, John uses action verbs to tell the readers what Jesus does. Firstly, Jesus showed (ἔδειξεν) them his hand and side. Then he breathed (ἐνεφύσησεν) on them. The words of Jesus are also repeated to create vividness. The first words that Jesus says to them are ‘Peace be with you’ (John 20:20). This is repeated again with more details, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you’ (John 20:21).

Jesus’ testimony to truth is fulfilled through his death, passion and resurrection. Our discussion shows that John communicates it through vivid narrative, so that his readers are invited to receive Jesus’ testimony with sensory imagination.

2.2. The Disciples’ Testimony to Jesus: Models of Seeing and Believing

In Section 2.1, we showed that Jesus’ testimony to the truth, namely his death and resurrection, is portrayed vividly to draw the readers in. The focus was on the literary and rhetorical power of John’s narrative ἐνάργεια. In this section, we shift our attention to how John deals with how disciples are meant to receive that testimony, and with the relationship between sight and faith.

In the resurrection narrative (John 20), the verbal form of ‘sight’ occurs 13 times. This is remarkable in a short chapter. In John 20, John emphasises the characters’ seeing. The objects of their sight are the empty tomb, linen wrapping and the resurrected Jesus. The account of the empty tomb follows the narrative of Jesus’ burial. In John’s account, the empty tomb is emphasised by John for not only Mary, but also Peter and the Beloved Disciple, all see that it is empty.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Morris, *John*, 834.

Upon hearing Mary's report, Peter and the other disciple run to the tomb. Their running indicates that they want to 'see' with their own eyes what Mary has reported.⁸¹ They run to see the empty tomb and the absence of Jesus' body. The other disciple arrives first and 'saw (βλέπει) the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in' (John 20:5). Peter went into the tomb and saw (θεωρεῖ) the linen wrapping and the cloth that has been on Jesus' head lying separately (John 20:7). Even though all of them have seen the empty tomb, only the Beloved Disciple 'saw and believed' (εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν) (John 20:8). But what did the Beloved Disciple see and believe? Scholars' views vary. Minear accepts the view of Augustine and other Church Fathers that the Beloved Disciple believes Mary's testimony: someone has taken Jesus' body.⁸² However, if he had not believed Mary's testimony, he would not have run to the tomb. Besides, in John 20:25, 27, 29, the object of belief is always the resurrection of Jesus. That is likely to be the case here as well. Thus most commentators agree that John means that the beloved disciple believes in Jesus' resurrection because he sees the empty tomb and the grave clothes.⁸³

But if what the beloved disciple believes is Jesus' resurrection, why does John add 'for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead' in John 20:9? Some scholars argue that John's statement in John 20:9 provides the reason that Peter and the Beloved Disciple did not have resurrection faith by merely seeing the empty tomb,⁸⁴ since they had not yet understood the scripture, they cannot possibly interpret the empty tomb rightly.⁸⁵ However, I suggest that John adds this verse in order to show that the faith of the beloved disciple comes first. That is his faith based on sight precedes his full comprehension of the scriptures. As Morris suggests, the believers 'were first convinced that Christ was risen. Then they came to

⁸¹ Carson, *John*, 636.

⁸² M. Bockmuehl, "Resurrection," Pages 102–118 in *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus* (ed. M. Bockmuehl; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 108. For Church Fathers who hold this view, see P. S. Minear, "'We Don't Know Where...' John 20:2," *Interpretation* 30 (1976): 125–139, at 127; G. C. Nicholson, *Death as Departure: The Johannine Descent-Ascent Schema* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 69–71.

⁸³ Elowsky, *John 11-21*, 341; Schnackenburg, *John*, 312 ; Lincoln, *John*, 491; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 373; Brown, *John*, 2:1005.

⁸⁴ Charlesworth, *Beloved Disciple*, 77. Cited by L. Novakovic, *Raised from the Dead According to Scripture: The Role of Israel's Scripture in the Early Christian Interpretations of Jesus' Resurrection* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 174. Keener argues that their faith is only 'sign-faith, faith based on seeing.' See Keener, *John*, 2:1184. Similarly, Koester, 'Resurrection,' 69.

⁸⁵ J. Beutler, "The Use of 'Scripture' in the Gospel of John," Pages 147–162 in *Exploring the Gospel of John* (eds. R. A. Culpepper and C. C. Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 152.

a fuller meaning in certain Old Testament passages.’⁸⁶ If this interpretation is correct, then John 20:9 indeed confirms that faith based on sight is not necessarily inferior faith.

Ridderbos rejects the view that sees the Beloved Disciple as an ideal disciple. He argues that one cannot speak of ‘a clear and strong faith of the beloved disciple.’⁸⁷ However, John’s statement in John 19:35 already shows that the Beloved Disciple is portrayed as a credible witness (‘His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth’), and John appears to address the readers directly to invite them to accept the witness of the Beloved Disciple based on his seeing (‘He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe’). John insists that this is the kind of testimony that the readers are meant to believe – that is, testimony based on seeing. Thus if the Beloved Disciple has already been presented as a model of the one who sees and believes for the future readers, this is how the readers are to understand the Beloved Disciple’s ‘seeing and believing’ in John 20:8. The Beloved Disciple’s response to the empty tomb corresponds to John 19:35 and makes him an ideal witness.⁸⁸

In the Gospel, we find that Jesus rebukes those who see him but do not believe (John 6:36), but Jesus expects that people should have faith after seeing him, ‘This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life’ (John 6:40; cf. 11:45). Thus the Beloved Disciple is the model for future believers. The question is, if those who saw and believed are the models for future believers, how can the future believers follow their example since they do not have the chance to see Jesus physically? The answer lies in Jesus’ macarism: ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe’ (John 20:29). The future believers do not need to feel dismayed because they cannot see Jesus physically. Precisely because they cannot see Jesus physically, John makes his narrative vivid so that they can ‘see’ Jesus through their sensory imagination. In addition to that, unlike the disciples who did not yet understand the scripture when they saw the empty tomb (John 20:9), Christian readers do have scriptural knowledge that Jesus is about to die

⁸⁶ Morris, *John*, 835.

⁸⁷ Ridderbos, *John*, 633.

⁸⁸ Schnackenburg, *John*, 312; Lincoln, *John*, 491; Brown, *John*, 2:1005.

and will be resurrected when they read the Gospel. They are more ready to believe in Jesus even though they have not seen Jesus physically.

The narrative of the empty tomb, along with the readers' knowledge of the scriptures (John 20:9), then prepares them for the narrative of Jesus' epiphany in John 20, which marks the climax of the resurrection narrative. Mary Magdalene is the first person to see the resurrected Jesus. Although she does not recognise Jesus immediately, this does not alter the fact that she is the first witness of the resurrected Jesus, who is then given the commission to testify to Jesus' resurrection. Her faith is based on her perception of Jesus and her testimony is regarded as important. After receiving Jesus' commandment, Mary goes to the disciples and announces to them, 'I have seen (έώρακα) the Lord' (John 20:18). This statement binds the two appearances of Jesus together.⁸⁹ The disciples also share her direct encounter with the risen Lord on the same day for they also 'saw (ιδόντες) the Lord' (John 20:20).

The account of Jesus' second appearance is presented in John 20:19–20. The disciples encounter the resurrected Jesus in a room locked for fear of 'the Jews' (John 20:19). Jesus appears and even shows them his hands and his side (John 20:20a). Since Jesus already provides them with physical evidence, there is no need for them to ask for further proof. Thus they rejoice when they see the Lord (John 20:20b). This sensory encounter is emphasised at the moment of the bestowal of the Paraclete. Jesus performs a physical action when bestowing the Spirit; he 'breathed on them' and said to them 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20:22). The Paraclete perfects the sensory encounter; he does not displace or undermine it.

Unlike in Luke 24:37–39, there is no mention here of unbelief on the part of the disciples.⁹⁰ Nor does Jesus invite them to touch him. In John, Jesus simply shows them his hands and his side without saying any words about their doubt or disbelief. His scars are evidence to prove that he is the same Jesus who was crucified and that

⁸⁹ H. E. Heaton, *The Mary Magdalene Tradition: Witness and Counter-Witness in Early Christian Communities* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2004), 151.

⁹⁰ Many scholars note the parallels between John and Luke. On the parallels in the resurrection account between John and Luke, see Brown, *John*, 2:1020. Bultmann regards Luke 24:27–29 as the source of John's resurrection account. Lindars, *John*, 611; R. E. Brown, "The Resurrection in John 20 – a Series of Diverse Reactions," *Worship* 64 (1990): 194–206, at 202 n. 12.

he has been raised bodily.⁹¹ Through the disciples' sense perception, they have 'real, palpable, empirical, physical evidence that Jesus was not mythically or just "spiritually," raised from the dead.'⁹² They can not only hear Jesus' voice but also see him in person.

In the Lucan narrative, the disciples do not believe when they first see Jesus. 'They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost' (Luke 24:37). In John, however, there is no mention of fear on their part in any account of Jesus' appearance. They believe that Jesus has risen once they see him. Although the word 'believe' is not used, their response, 'So the other disciples told him [Thomas], "We have seen the Lord"' (John 20:25), tells us that they believe in Jesus' resurrection and become witnesses of Jesus. Here we have the pattern of 'seeing' and 'telling' (testifying) and 'hearing,' as we see in Mary's account. In fact, this pattern has already been used by John, in chapter one, where the disciples *saw* Jesus and *told* others to 'come and see' him (John 1:46). The Samaritan woman also bore testimony to Jesus and told others to 'come and see' him (John 4:29). Those who hear their testimony then come to see Jesus. After Jesus' resurrection, no one asks others to come and see him. It is Jesus who takes the initiative to show himself to people, so that they can see him.

Thomas is absent when Jesus first appears to the disciples. When they tell him: 'We have seen (ἐωράκαμεν) the Lord,' he refuses to believe. He says to them: 'Unless I see (ἴδω) the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe' (John 20:25). From the narrative, we are not sure whether Thomas touches Jesus or not.⁹³ But Thomas' doubt is certainly removed after he sees Jesus. He confesses Jesus as 'My Lord and my God' (John 20:28). Thomas goes from being someone who demands to see and touch Jesus to someone who recognises Jesus as his Lord and God because he has seen the risen Jesus with his own eyes.

Jesus' testimony is presented vividly to the readers, as it is to the disciples, who are to testify to Jesus' resurrection based on what they have seen and heard. The

⁹¹ In some Jewish traditions, it was believed that a person would be resurrected in the same form in which he died, before being healed. Bultmann, *John*, 691.

⁹² Keener, *John*, 2:1202.

⁹³ See note 49.

Beloved Disciple is the only one who believes on seeing the empty tomb and the linen wrapping. He is portrayed as an ideal witness. Mary believes when she sees the resurrected Jesus and based on that, testifies to Jesus' resurrection. The disciples hear Mary's testimony but their joy and faith emerge only after they see the resurrected Jesus for themselves. Once they perceive Jesus, they too are ready to testify to him. Thomas hears the disciples' testimony but does not believe because he has not seen the resurrected Jesus. Once he sees him, he also believes that Jesus has been raised. Through the extensive use of the verbs of sight and the emphasis on the sense of sight, John shows the importance of sense perception in relation to faith.

2.3. A Prophetic Sign and its Imitation in the Life of the Church

In the previous sections, we showed that those who 'saw and believed' were models for future generations and that faith might begin through sight. However, to show more specifically how the combination of sense perception and testimony is to be received in the Johannine community, we have to refer back to John 13, where Jesus performs a physical act in the sight of the disciples and asks them to imitate it. This suggests how sense perception and testimony operate in the life of the church. Then we look at other redactional layers of the Johannine tradition to support the consistency of the picture of a significant role for sense perception in combination with testimony in the life of the Joahannine community (section 2.4).

In the Farewell Discourse, sense perception and testimony are used in ways that emphasise their continuing importance for the post-Easter community. John points forward to how believers should enact their discipleship, that is, by following Jesus' example. Jesus sets this example through the symbolic action of footwashing.⁹⁴ It is performed so that the disciples can imitate and practise it. They are encouraged to do so and told that, if they do, they are blessed (John 13:17). This is the first time that Jesus speaks about blessings. The second time is the macarism addressed to future believers in John 20:29. Far from suggesting a significant distinction between the first believers and later generations, or a denigration of sense perception for the life of

⁹⁴ The narrative of footwashing has raised issues of source, structure and interpretations. Richter has summarised all the different approaches to the symbolism of footwashing from the apostolic fathers to contemporary scholars. G. Richter, *Die Fusswaschung im Johannesevangelium: Geschichte Ihrer Deutung* (Regensburg: F Pustet, 1967).

discipleship, John 13:17 asks disciples to imitate the example that Jesus has given them, and it does so in a way that is unequivocally sensory. The footwashing stands in the tradition of prophetic sign-acts: it is something enacted before the senses of the first disciples. This is how Jesus communicates his ‘example’; the sensory quality is not arbitrary, but rather places it in the OT prophetic pattern.⁹⁵

2.3.1. Footwashing as a Prophetic Sign-Act

In John 13:1, John informs his readers, ‘Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father.’ This marks the end of Jesus’ public ministry and implies Jesus’ absence from this physical world. By now, the readers already know that this hour refers to Jesus’ death. In conjunction with this, Jesus now performs a symbolic sign of the preparation for his death.⁹⁶ John makes this connection through his narrative. He provides Jesus’ inside view, ‘knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God’ (John 13:3), and he connects this with Jesus’ action (John 13:4). This physical act of Jesus has theological significance like the prophetic acts in the Old Testament.⁹⁷

As we saw in Chapter 4, the prophetic sign-acts in the Old Testament have the purpose of foretelling the future of a person or a nation. They are also symbols which effectively reveal the knowledge of the mind and acts of God. Most of them portend what will happen to the Israelites yet, unless God reveals their meaning, no one can understand their significance, so usually there are speeches after the signs-acts to explain the meaning. In a similar way, Jesus’ action symbolises what Jesus will do for

⁹⁵ Scholars have diverse views of whether footwashing has a sacramental significance (i.e. baptism and Eucharist) or a soteriological meaning or is an example of humility. For a brief summary of various interpretations of footwashing, see A. J. Hultgren, "The Johannine Footwashing (13. 1–11) as Symbol of Eschatological Hospitality," *New Testament Studies* 28 (1982): 539–546; D. Gibson, "The Johannine Footwashing and the Death of Jesus: A Dialogue with Scholarship," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 25 (2007): 50–60; F. F. Segovia, "'John 13:1-20: The Footwashing in the Johannine Tradition'," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 73 (1982): 31–51; Richter, *Die Fusswaschung*, 247–278.

⁹⁶ Cf. Brown, *John*, 2:566; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:19.

⁹⁷ Jesus’ footwashing is regarded as a prophetic action by many scholars. Cf. M. Coloe, "Welcome into the Household of God: The Footwashing in John 13," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 66 (2004): 400–415, at 407; S. M. Schneiders, "The Foot Washing (John 13:1-20): An Experiment in Hermeneutics," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43 (1981): 76–92, at 81.

his disciples. Jesus first performs the action (John 13:1–11). Then he adds a deeper understanding of his action through his speech (John 13:12–15).

The words that John uses to describe Jesus' actions in John 13:1–11 have theological significance. In the beginning of the narrative, he says that Jesus 'took off' (τίθησιν) his robe (John 13:4), and then, after Jesus washed his disciples' feet, Jesus 'took up' (ἔλαβεν) his robe (John 13:12). These two verbs are used in John 10:17 to refer to Jesus' laying down his life and taking it up again: 'For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down (τίθημι) my life in order to take it up (λάβω) again.'⁹⁸ The meaning of these actions and their association with John 10:17 are not apparent to the disciples. It is only after the death and resurrection of Jesus that they can understand the symbolic meaning of these actions (cf. John 13:7).⁹⁹ However, the symbolic meaning of these actions may be clear to the readers because they share this ideology with the narrator (John 13:1–3). They know that Jesus' actions are related to his hour and his departure to the Father (John 13:1). They are also told that Judas will betray Jesus (John 13:2) and that Jesus comes from the Father and will go to the Father (John 13:3). What John says in John 13:1–3 helps the readers to know that what Jesus does is associated with his death. Another hint that suggests that John is linking Jesus' actions with his death and glorification is Jesus' words to Peter, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' From Jesus' own explanation of his action, which connects it with servanthood, we see that what this means is that only through Jesus humbling himself as a suffering servant on the cross, can the disciples have eternal life with Jesus and participate in his glory.¹⁰⁰ Thus the footwashing has a soteriological significance.¹⁰¹

As in the prophetic signs-acts in the Old Testament where God explains to the people what these sign-acts mean, so Jesus also explains to his disciples what his action means. First of all, Jesus affirms his identity as the disciples' Lord (ὁ κύριος) and Teacher (ὁ διδάσκαλος). He does not deny this relationship between the superior

⁹⁸ Koester, *Symbolism*, 116; Coloe, "John 13": 407.

⁹⁹ Cf. John 2:22; 12:16. Ridderbos, *John*, 459.

¹⁰⁰ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 234.

¹⁰¹ Hultgren, "Footwashing": 541; Koester, *Symbolism*, 117; Tolmie, *Jesus*, 71 n. 26; Segovia, "John 13:1-20": 43.

and the inferiors. He, however, translates this relationship into love and friendship.¹⁰² What he does to them is an act of love and they should do as he has done to them (John 13:14–15). Jesus uses this physical action to signify his impending death and his self-giving love for the disciples and he commands his disciples to repeat his action (John 13:14) in order to show their love for each other. This does not mean, however, that their imitation of Jesus is to be limited to the act of footwashing; it should be extended to all in the humble service that they do to each other.¹⁰³

2.3.2. Vivid Description of Footwashing

John communicates Jesus' symbolic actions in a vivid way to draw his readers into his narrative. As we saw in Chapter 7, John also uses the technique of ἐνάργεια when depicting Jesus' actions. Firstly, he gives a detailed description of Jesus' actions. Instead of simply telling the readers that Jesus washed the disciples' feet, John started with how Jesus gets up from the table, removes his robe, takes a towel and wraps it around himself. Only then, do we see the action of washing the disciples' feet. He not only washes their feet, but also wipes them with the towel. Secondly, to make the scene vivid, John uses many action verbs, such as 'get up (ἐγείρω),' 'take off/lay down (τίθημι),' 'take (λαμβάνω),' 'tie/gird (διαζώννυμι)' 'pour (βάλλω),' 'wash (νίπτω)' and 'wipe (ἐκμάσσω)' (John 13:4–5). These action verbs help the readers to create a pictorial image of Jesus' movement and actions. Thirdly, the word for Jesus' main action, washing (νίπτω), is repeated several times. It first appears in John 13:5 and then is repeated several times in Jesus and Peter's conversations: σύ μου νίπτεις τοὺς πόδας (John 13:6); οὐ μὴ νίψῃς μου τοὺς πόδας (John 13:8a); ἐὰν μὴ νίψω σε, οὐκ ἔχεις μέρος μετ' ἐμοῦ (John 13:8b). This also enhances the vividness of the narrative.

These examples show that John is eager to make his narrative vivid for his readers. Jesus not only washes the disciples' feet physically but also asks the disciples to 'wash one another's feet (ἀλλήλων νίπτειν τοὺς πόδας).' He expects his disciples to follow his example, so he says to them, 'If you know these things, you are blessed (μακάριοι) if you do them' (John 13:17).

¹⁰² Schneiders, "The Foot Washing": 88; Koester, *Symbolism*, 117.

¹⁰³ Lincoln, *John*, 372.

There has been a debate as to how the disciples are to fulfill Jesus' example: through a liturgical act of footwashing or through acts of humility and love? Some scholars argue that the Johannine community indeed practised footwashing within the community.¹⁰⁴ If the community preserved the command, they would have obeyed the command, 'you also ought to wash one another's feet' (John 13:14).¹⁰⁵ But there is nowhere in the Johannine literature suggesting that footwashing should be institutionalised and there is no evidence of a rite of footwashing in the early church. Thus one has to be cautious about lifting footwashing to the status of universal rite based on only this occurrence.¹⁰⁶ The focus of Jesus' command is that the disciples should imitate Jesus' humble act of love towards his brothers. This invisible love is embodied through Jesus' act of laying down his life. Thus most scholars see Jesus' command as an invitation to embodied practice, that is, the act of love or humility.¹⁰⁷ There is no conclusive evidence to know exactly how Jesus wishes his disciples to fulfill his commandment. It is probable that Jesus expects the disciples to show love to each other through their humble service, but this should not be limited to the act of footwashing, since for the first disciples, footwashing was already a common practice.¹⁰⁸

If what Jesus wants the disciples to imitate is footwashing, this is certainly a physical act. But if Jesus is referring to the loving service done to one another, then this may be regarded as 'spiritual service.'¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, spiritual service is still embodied through physical acts. In Chapter 6, we showed that Jesus imitates the work

¹⁰⁴ John Thomas and Herold Weiss both argue that footwashing was actually practised in the Johannine community. J. C. Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991); J. C. Thomas, "A Note on the Text of John 13:10," *Novum Testamentum* 29 (1987): 46–52, at 52; H. Weiss, "Foot Washing in the Johannine Community," *Novum Testamentum* 21 (1979): 298–325. However, Thomas' thesis is questioned because the evidence he draws on is from the fourth to sixth centuries C.E. and whether footwashing was seen as a sacrament by the early churches is debated. Cf. L. L. Johns, review of J. C. Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community*, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73 (1999); C. H. Talbert, review of J. C. Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112 (1993): 158.

¹⁰⁵ Weiss, "Foot Washing": 300.

¹⁰⁶ See Carson, *John*, 468.

¹⁰⁷ Hultgren, "Footwashing"; Ridderbos, *John*, 463; Richter, *Die Fusswaschung*, 295–98; Lincoln, *John*, 372; Coloe, "John 13": 414.

¹⁰⁸ Keener, *John*, 2:902.

¹⁰⁹ Most scholars see this as a loving service, Bultmann, *John*, 475; Ridderbos, *John*, 463; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 236.

of the Father and that this imitation is embodied through his physical healing service and actions. Similarly when the disciples are to imitate Jesus and manifest Jesus' love to others, they are to do it in a physical way. Indeed, Jesus' physical act of footwashing implies that the disciples are to embody their love in a physical way because the way in which Jesus shows his invisible love to the disciples is through visible footwashing and, to an even greater extent, through what that symbolises, that is, his laying down his life for the disciples.

In this section, we have shown that Jesus performs a sign-act similar to that found in the Old Testament Prophets. This sign-act symbolises his impending act of laying down his life for the disciples. Like the Old Testament prophets, Jesus communicates this sensually through physical action rather than simply explaining it in words. He asks the disciples to imitate what he does. Thus he expects their imitation of him to be grounded in what is vivid to their senses. For the first disciples this will be grounded in the memory of what they themselves experienced, firstly in this footwashing incident, then at the scene of Jesus' passion and resurrection. For later generations, it is grounded in the memory of the community which is made vivid to their imagination through John's use of ἐνάργεια in the narrative of the footwashing, passion and resurrection. We may compare this with what we saw in Chapter 4 regarding the role of the Exodus in the memory of the Israelites: later generations had not experienced what God had done in the Exodus firsthand, yet the Deuteronomist urges them to obey the commandments of God by appealing to what they have 'seen.' This is because, as members of the community, they share the same tradition of collective memory which is made vivid to their imagination.

The disciples are asked to fulfill the command in a sensory and practically beneficial way that testifies to others. This applies not only to footwashing, but also to any other form of embodied enactment of Jesus' love. Indeed, the latter would make their mode of testimony to the world parallel to Jesus' mode of testimony to the world. They do in the sight of others what they saw Jesus did, just as Jesus did in the sight of others what he saw the Father do.

2.4. Sense Perception and Testimony in Johannine Tradition

The importance of sense perception and testimony is evident not only in John's Gospel, but also in other layers of the Johannine tradition, such as John 21 and 1 John, where the combination of sense perception and testimony may be perceived as significant in the 'relecture' of the Johannine tradition.¹¹⁰ A brief investigation of these two passages shows that even when the Paraclete comes, the Johannine community continues to cultivate their sensory imagination in order to remember and testify to Jesus.

2.4.1. Sense Perception and Testimony in John 21¹¹¹

In John 21:1–14, sense perception is not used as prominently as in John 20 but only twice (John 21:7, 9). However, the verb φανερώω is used three times to describe Jesus' physical appearance to his disciples.¹¹² It occurs twice in John 21:1 and once in John 21:14. It thus forms an *inclusio* of Jesus' appearance narrative in the Epilogue.

Jesus was asked to manifest himself in John 7:4, but he refused. Now Jesus manifests himself after his resurrection several times without being asked. Even though the verbs of sight are not used here to show the visibility of the resurrected Jesus, a 'very direct empirical narration' is to be understood in John 21.¹¹³ There are several things that make Jesus' manifestation vivid. Firstly, John provides details of

¹¹⁰ A. Dettwiler assumes that the Johannine community are the ones who are responsible for the redactional layers that are identified in the Gospel. He argues that there is a 'relecture' in the Johannine tradition. That is the original text interpreted and expanded as 'relecture' of the original. A. Dettwiler, *Die Gegenwart des Erhöhten: Eine Exegetische Studie zu den johanneischen Abschiedsreden (Joh 13,31-16,33) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Relecture-Charakters* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 46–47, 51–52. See also, J. Zumstein, 'Der Prozess der Relecture in der johanneischen Literatur,' *NTS* 42 (1996), 394–411.

¹¹¹ There is a debate on whether John 21 is an appendix to chapters 1–20 added by a later redactor or by the author himself. See Morris, *John*, 850. In either case, I accept Schneiders' view that it is 'an integral part of the Gospel in fundamental theological continuity with chapters 1–20.' The purpose of the Epilogue is to close the Gospel by 'transferring the reader's attention from the experience of the first disciples with the historical Jesus to the experience of the contemporary church with the glorified Jesus, that is, from the story of those who "saw" to the story of those who "believe without having seen" (cf. 20:29).' S. M. Schneiders, "John 21:1–14," *Interpretation* 43 (1989): 70–75, at 71.

¹¹² For John's use of this verb, see M. Hasitschka, "The Significance of the Resurrection Appearance in John 21," Pages 311–328 in *Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (eds. C. R. Koester and R. Bieringer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 327.

¹¹³ Bockmuehl, "Phaneroō": 91.

the place (the Sea of Tiberias, John 21:1), of the names of the disciples (Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee and the sons of Zebedee, John 21:2) and the size and the number of fish caught (full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them, John 21:11).¹¹⁴ Secondly, Jesus' manifestation is repeated several times in different ways. In John 21:1, 'After these things Jesus showed (ἐφανερώσεν) himself again to the disciples ... and he showed (ἐφανερώσεν) himself in this way.' John repeats it again with more detail, 'This was now the third time that Jesus appeared (ἐφανερώθη) to the disciples after he was raised from the dead' (John 21:14). This repetition helps to make the scene vivid to the readers and draw them in.

At the end of the Epilogue, John affirms that: 'This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true' (21:24). The juxtaposition of the language of testimony and of truth has already occurred several times in the Gospel.¹¹⁵ Even though the language of testimony is not used in the account of Jesus' appearance in John 20, it can be traced everywhere. All the circumstances and incidents, such as the empty tomb and the appearance of the risen Jesus, go to prove the fact of Jesus' resurrection. Each incident is testified to by eyewitnesses who bear testimony to Jesus' resurrection.

The language that John uses in John 21:24 is very similar to what we find in John 5:32: 'There is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that his testimony to me is true' and in John 19:35b: 'His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.' In these verses, we find three identical terms μαρτυρέω, ἀληθής and οἶδα, which are used to stress the credibility of the testimony provided. The identity of 'we' is not specified but it probably refers to the believing community. This use of 'we' shifts the focus from the past community and its experience of Jesus to the present community.¹¹⁶ The use of the plural corresponds to Jesus' statement in John 8:17, where he refers to the Jewish legal requirement of two witnesses to validate a testimony.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ John 5:32; 8:14, 17; 19:35. Used negatively: John 5:31; 8:14.

¹¹⁶ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 44–46.

The combination of sense perception and testimony which we find in John 1–20 continues to be significant, even after the bestowal of the Spirit in John 20. We see this emphasis on sense perception and testimony in 1 John also.

2.4.2. Sense Perception and Testimony in 1 John

Both sense perception and testimony are used together in the Johannine Epistles, especially in the prologue of the First Epistle.¹¹⁷ In 1 John 1:1, the author says,

‘We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard (ὁ ἀκηκόαμεν), what we have seen (ὁ ἑώρακάμεν) with our eyes, what we have looked at (ἐθεασάμεθα) and touched (ἐψηλάφησαν) with our hands, concerning the word of life.’ (1 John 1:1)

Through emphasising different verbs of sense perception and various parts of bodies, the author appeals to the rhetoric of sense perception to draw his readers in. This is combined with a rhetorical appeal to collective memory (as we discussed in Chapter 4). The Johannine community include themselves in the eyewitness testimony of Jesus through collective memory. Therefore, they can claim that they shared in the first-hand experience of the physical Jesus, even if not first-hand in a literal sense.

In the next verse, sense perception and testimony are used in combination: ‘This life was revealed (ἐφανερώθη), and we have seen (ἑώρακάμεν) it and testify (μαρτυροῦμεν) to it, and declare (ἀπαγγέλλομεν) to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed (ἐφανερώθη) to us’ (1 John 1:2).¹¹⁸ Again the Johannine community emphasise that their testimony is based on what they have seen. They

¹¹⁷ The author begins this letter without the prescript in a manner similar to the Gospel of John. R. Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1992), 48. When comparing the life situation and theological difference between the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John, it is more likely that 1 John is written after the composition of the Gospel. Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 34–35.

¹¹⁸ Westcott refers this to ‘the historic manifestation of the Life.’ B. F. Westcott, *The Epistles of St John: The Greek Text with Notes* (Appleford: Marcham Manor, 1966), 1–2.

follow the pattern of the Beloved Disciple to show that this is the kind of testimony that they now present to the later believers.

In the next verse, verbs of sense perception occur again with the verb ἀπαγγέλλομεν. ‘We declare to you what we have seen (ἐωράκαμεν) and heard (ἀκηκόαμεν) so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’ (1 John 1:3). The purpose of the testimony is identified in this verse. That is to have fellowship with the Johannine community and with the Father and the Son. This fellowship is maintained only through confession of Jesus as God’s son (1 John 2:22–23).

Our study shows that even after the coming of the Paraclete, sense perception is still significant and is always associated with testimony to Jesus. In 1 John 1:1–3, we see the combination of sense perception and testimony. This shows that, in other layers of the Johannine literary tradition too, the combination of sense perception and testimony is taken up again and is regarded as significant.

3. Conclusion

In this Chapter, we have responded to those who argue that the first disciples were in a disadvantageous position compared with later generations, because the former did not have the Paraclete, and who, on that basis, downplay the significance of sense perception in John. We see that the first disciples were indeed in a disadvantageous position without the Paraclete, not because they had sense perception of Jesus, but because they did not fully understand what they perceived. The role of the Paraclete is not to denigrate their sense perception but to help perfect their understanding of what they had perceived. Once they receive the Paraclete (in John 20), they are in a very good position indeed! For John’s readers, the Paraclete helps to perfect their insight into what they can only imagine through John’s vivid description of his narrative. The macarism in John 20.29 indicates that this mode of access to Jesus is sufficient for later believers and that they are not inferior to the first disciples. Both the first disciples and later believers rely on the Paraclete to lead them into truth (John 16:13), but both also rely on a form of sensory encounter, whether directly (the first disciples) or through their imagination (later readers).

The rhetoric of sense perception can be seen in John's vivid narratives of the footwashing and of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. We see that John employs the technique of ἐνάργεια throughout his Gospel. This vividness of John's narrative shows his emphasis on sense perception. The absence of Jesus and the coming of the Spirit do not diminish the importance of sense perception. Rather, it is through the rhetoric of sense perception that the Spirit can remind the disciples of what Jesus said to them and reveal to them the significance of his actions.

The faith of future readers is not based on seeing or hearing Jesus directly. However, their faith is still related to sense perception in that it is based on the first disciples' physical vision of the risen Lord and their physical contact with him. It is through the senses of the first disciples that readers in future generations also see, hear or touch Jesus in their imagination. The life and the person of Jesus are presented to us indirectly through his first disciples, with whom the readers travel on the journey of faith. Readers can share the disciples' excitement when they first meet the earthly Jesus and come to believe that he is the King, the prophet, the promised Messiah and the Son of God. They can travel with them and see their faith enhanced by their sensory perception of the miracles and words of Jesus and then finally, through Thomas' confession, they can share his conviction that Jesus is their Lord and their God. Through the rhetoric of sense perception, they encounter the risen Jesus through these characters' seeing, hearing and touching and thus they are made ready to bear testimony to Jesus and become his witnesses in the world.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This study has shown that John employs the language of sense perception integrally with the theme of testimony to draw his readers into the narrative. This combination of sense perception and testimony is rooted in the Old Testament, where the revelation and knowledge of God are made known in a sense-perceptible way. John conveys this theologically significant combination of sense perception and testimony through the Graeco-Roman rhetorical technique of *ἐνάργεια*, which serves to enhance the vividness of the narrative and to draw his readers, in their imagination, into the experience of the disciples.

We have outlined in our first chapter the focus of the thesis and have presented the history of scholarship on sense perception and on testimony showing both its strengths and weaknesses and indicating what we wished to develop from the scholarly discussion.

In Chapter 2 we gave a brief overview of John's use of sense perception. This showed that there is strong evidence to suggest that sense perception should be understood in the context of testimony. We also identified a number of ways in which John draws on material from the Old Testament to develop the relationship between the two. Our discussion showed that there is a *prima facie* case for regarding sense perception as important in giving testimony, including testimony about God. Sense perception in relation to the divine is complicated, because it operates at more than two levels, but a physical and emotive dimension is always significant. So, John's use of testimony not only has a juridical sense and function but should also be understood in the wider contexts of knowledge of God and the revelation of God in Jesus. This is where sense perception becomes significant, for it helps to draw the readers into the narrative, so that they can see and hear with the author and the characters and ultimately bear testimony to what they have heard and seen of Jesus.

In Chapter 3 we argued that John is writing to believers to strengthen their faith. This governs the rhetorical purpose with which he appeals to physical sense perception and presents testimonies to his readers.

Since a case had been made for seeing John's emphasis on sense perception in the context of the theme of testimony, the next two chapters, 4 and 5, investigated the background of how the physical senses substantiate testimony. In Chapter 4, we showed that the material John draws from the Old Testament already emphasises that God's self-revelation is often vividly and dramatically perceptible to the senses. Thus the scriptures that shape John's theology already allow some measure of the sensory in apprehending the revelation of God. We explored two theophanic events that John alludes to: Jacob's ladder and God's theophany on Mount Sinai. We showed that divine revelation is mediated through the senses and that the MT does not seek to soften this, despite the tradition that God cannot be seen. The visible encounters with God are significant in these texts, and not only that, they are narrated vividly to draw the readers into them. Through sensory descriptions the readers, even though not present at the scenes, can visualise the events and be drawn into the narratives personally and emotionally.

The theophany at Mount Sinai and the Exodus miracles are considered by Israel to be the most important events in their history. The Israelites are consistently reminded that they have seen God and that God brought them out of Egypt by his mighty acts. Like the theophany, these miracles serve the purpose of making God known. By looking at the narrative of the Exodus miracles, we showed how sense perception is used as a means of bringing readers to knowledge of God. Those who witnessed the Exodus miracles and the theophany were encouraged to recall those events, so that they would keep God's laws and remain faithful in their covenantal relationship with Him. Those removed in time from the events were also included through a communal vision and memory, so that they could remember what God had done for them and would obey God's commandments. In this way, the rhetorical use of eyewitness language with sense perception plays a significant role in attaining knowledge of God.

We have also explored the sign-acts in the Old Testament. They are usually performed in the sight of the people to foretell future events. They are used to convey knowledge of God and God's intended actions, despite the fact that the people to whom they are shown continue to suffer from spiritual blindness and deafness. Lastly, in the Book of Isaiah, we explored several significant themes such as the motifs of blindness and deafness, of light and darkness, of trial and of sense perception. Our studies have shown that sense perception is emphasised in the context of testimony and, in particular, the testimony that is related to the knowledge of God. This sense-perceptible divine revelation serves as the basis for John's emphasis on sense perception and testimony.

In Chapter 5, we explored the Graeco-Roman background. Special attention was paid to Graeco-Roman rhetoric because John wrote in Greek and therefore was liable to have been influenced by the techniques of Greek and Roman writers of his time. In order to communicate with his readership effectively, John could naturally have used literary devices and narrative techniques familiar to him. We showed that sense perception is often used in the context of juridical testimony to achieve *ἐνάργεια*, a rhetorical technique that is commonly used in Graeco-Roman culture. Writings by Plato and Cicero are examples that show orators and writers used *ἐνάργεια* to persuade their audience and readers. We showed that *ἐνάργεια* is extensively used in Plato's *Apology* as a means to persuade his readers to accept his presentation of Socrates' trial and to share his viewpoint that Socrates was innocent. Cicero appeals to sense perception to reach *ἐνάργεια*, which is no different in purpose from the Greek rhetoric of Plato's *Apology*. However, whereas an appeal to senses other than sight and hearing is not common in Greek rhetoric, one can see in Cicero's writing an appeal to the senses of smell and touch also. The examination of Cicero's use of *ἐνάργεια* in the *Verrine Orations* showed it to be a rhetorical technique used in the juridical context and showed that its ultimate aim is to persuade the audience to take the same view as the author or speaker.

The orators persuade their audience to believe what they describe is true by making the events vivid for them in their imagination. The rhetorical technique of the law courts is adopted by John in his effort to enhance the rhetorical power of his testimony by making it vivid. Thus our Part I showed that it is possible that John is

appealing to the senses and imagination of his readers in order to draw them into the testimony of the Gospel. His emphasis on sense perception in the context of testimony is, however, rooted in the Jewish scriptures.

In Part II, we turned to the Gospel itself and showed how the background discussed in Part I is deployed in John's narrative. Firstly, John alludes to the Old Testament materials discussed in Chapter 4 and presents the testimony of Jesus' life and work as rooted in the Jewish scriptures. In doing so, he relocates God's sense-perceptible revelation onto Jesus. This radical move will be theologically acceptable to readers whose faith is shaped by the Old Testament because they already know that God can be known through the senses. In showing how God is now perceptible in the person and work of Jesus, John uses the Greco-Roman rhetorical technique of *ἐνάργεια* (as shown in Chapter 5). This enhances the sensory vividness of the narrative in order to draw the reader in and make the gospel scenes more persuasive. However, the persuasion achieved through sense perception in the gospel is not straightforward. We encounter many ambiguities in John's use of sense perception. In John's narrative, we find the irony of characters with different interpretations or levels of understanding of what is seen, heard, felt, touched or tasted. This suggests a complexity to Johannine sense perception, but does not weaken the thesis that sense perception is significant in John as a contribution to testimony. On the contrary, through reading the different models of seeing, hearing, feeling, touching and tasting of the characters, the readers can choose whose point of view they are to adopt. The irony and misunderstanding in the characters' reactions certainly incline the readers to align themselves with the narrators' privileged witnesses rather than with the weakest and the most ignorant. John's narrative is shaped in a way that emphasises the function of sense perception in the theme of testimony.

The purpose of Part II is to show how sense perception and testimony work together in combination in John's Gospel, and why it is theologically, rhetorically and (for John's primary audience) devotionally important that they do so. There are three stages in this argument.

In Chapter 6, we discussed how sense perception, for John, is theologically important in attaining the knowledge of God. Jesus' perception of God makes him a unique witness to God. The Baptist and the Beloved Disciple are then presented as the two privileged witness. They 'see and testify' to Jesus. Thus they both physically see Jesus and bear testimony to God's revelation in him. They model for the readers the ideal ways of responding to Jesus' words and work. They have spiritual insight which other characters lack. Because of the other characters' lack of spiritual insight, misunderstanding, ambiguity, doubts, rejection and irony are pervasive throughout the Gospel. Thus if the readers are to gain spiritual insight, it is important that they share the perception of the narrator, whose voice sometimes blends with those of the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple.

There has been a debate about the importance of signs for faith. This is the first issue tackled in Chapter 7 in order to show John's emphasis on physical sense perception in his presentation of God's testimony in Jesus. We argued that John presents that testimony in a vivid way in order to draw his readers in and involve them emotionally. At the same time he points out the irony of those characters who perceive and understand, or fail to understand, at a different level. These two approaches have the same purpose, that is, to indicate the significance of the physical senses for testimony. This emphasis on sense perception in testimony does not end with Jesus' public ministry. On the contrary, the rhetoric of sense perception in connection with the theme of testimony is prominent in John's vivid narrative of Jesus' death and resurrection.

In Chapter 8, we argued that sense perception and testimony continue to operate together within the community after Jesus' death and resurrection. That is in response to those who argue that the first disciples were in a disadvantageous position compared with later generations because they did not have the Paraclete and because of Jesus' macarism (John 20:29), and who, on that basis, denigrate the significance of sense perception in John. The first disciples were indeed in a disadvantageous position without the Paraclete because they did not fully understand what they perceived and heard (and certainly not because they were able to see, hear and touch Jesus at first hand). The role of the Paraclete is to help perfect the disciples' understanding of what they have perceived rather than to denigrate its importance.

Once they receive the Paraclete (in John 20), they are in the best of positions, of having seen and heard and now understanding. Our discussion showed that, whether in the context where Jesus will be removed from the physical sense perception of the disciples, or in the context of the coming of the Spirit and Jesus' macarism in John 20:29, sense perception is still regarded as important. The fact of the coming of the Paraclete does not denigrate sense perception, rather it helps to enhance and perfect its role in bringing new revelation and truth.

To support our argument that sense perception is important, the second part of Chapter 8 showed that John places strong emphasis on the importance of sense perception both for those who were at the scene of Jesus' death and resurrection, and in the continued life of the church. We first showed that Jesus' testimony to the truth is fulfilled through his death and resurrection and that John communicates this vividly to his readers, so that they can receive Jesus' testimony with sensory imagination. Secondly, we showed that the disciples are meant to receive this testimony through seeing and believing, so that they in turn can become the models of seeing and believing. Thirdly, we referred back to John 13 to show that Jesus' prophetic sign-act communicates a pattern for sense perception and testimony to be combined in the life of the church. Finally, we surveyed other redactional layers of the Johannine tradition and found that sense perception and testimony were still regarded as important in the Johannine community.

To conclude, John creates for his readers a vivid picture of events (as shown in Chapter 7); the role of the Paraclete for those readers is to help perfect their understanding of what they can only 'see' through their imagination. Thus faith for them grows in a similar way to how it grew for the first disciples, through a combination of sense perception (physical for the first disciples and in the imagination of later readers) and spiritual insight through the work of the Paraclete that leads them to understanding. This investigation showed that theology lies behind John's use of sense perception and testimony, in that it is rooted in the Old Testament, but that he employed Graeco-Roman strategies to make his narrative vivid in order to engage his readers. John does not downplay sense perception. He uses it in relation to testimony as a means of persuasion to serve his rhetorical purpose: 'these things are

written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name' (John 20:31).

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